

PARADISE LOST AND REPUBLICAN TRADITION
FROM ARISTOTLE TO MACHIAVELLI

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PARADISE LOST AND REPUBLICAN TRADITION
FROM ARISTOTLE TO MACHIAVELLI

by

William Walker



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To make a *hero* of Jesus!

— Nietzsche, *The Antichrist*

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'On Reason, Faith, and Freedom in *Paradise Lost*', *Studies in English Literature*, 47 (2007), 143–59; 'Reassessing Milton's Republicanism: Machiavelli, History, and *Paradise Lost*', in *Uncircumscribed Mind: Reading Milton Deeply*, ed. by Charles W. Durham and Kristin A. Pruitt (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2008), pp. 183–205. I thank these journals and the publishers of the anthology for their permission to reprint and for their readers' reports, many of which I have taken into account in reworking the material for this book.

ABBREVIATIONS

- Cat* Sallust, *The War with Catiline*, trans. by J. C. Rolfe, in *Sallust* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921; repr. 2000)
- D* Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Discourses*, ed. by Bernard Crick, trans. by Leslie Walker, rev. by Bernard Crick and Brian Richardson (New York: Penguin, 1970; repr. 1988)
- Duties* Cicero, *On Duties*, trans. by Margaret Atkins, ed. by M. T. Griffin and E. M. Atkins, trans. by E. M. Atkins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991)
- Ends* Cicero, *On Moral Ends*, ed. by Julia Annas, trans. by Raphael Woolf (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)
- His* Polybius, *The Histories*, trans. by W. R. Paton, 6 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1922–27; repr. 2000)
- Histories* Sallust, *The Histories*, trans. by J. C. Rolfe, in *Sallust* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921; repr. 2000)
- Jug* Sallust, *The War with Jugurtha*, trans. by J. C. Rolfe, in *Sallust* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921; repr. 2000)
- Laws* Cicero, *The Laws*, trans. by Niall Rudd, with introduction and notes by Jonathan Powell and Niall Rudd (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)
- Liv* Livy, *From the Founding of the City, Books I–X*, trans. by B. O. Foster, 4 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919–26)

- NE* Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. by W. D. Ross, in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. by Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941), pp. 927–1112
- Or* Cicero, *On the Orator*, trans. by E. W. Sutton and H. Rackham (London: William Heinemann, 1942; repr. 1976)
- P* Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. by Benjamin Jowett, in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. by Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941), pp. 1113–1316
- Phil* Cicero, *Philippics*, trans. by Walter C. A. Ker (London: William Heinemann, 1926; repr. 1957)
- Pr* Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. by George Bull (New York: Penguin, 1961; repr. 1979)
- Rep* Cicero, *The Republic*, trans. by Niall Rudd, with introduction and notes by Jonathan Powell and Niall Rudd (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)

NOTE ON THE TEXT

References to Aristotle's works are in accordance with the notation derived from Immanuel Bekker's edition of his works (1830) and are included in brackets in the text. References to works by Polybius, Cicero, Sallust, and Livy are to book and section numbers and are included in brackets in the text. References to Machiavelli's *The Prince* and *Discourses* are to page numbers and are included in brackets in the text. References to *Paradise Lost*, included in brackets in the text, are to book and line numbers of the poem as it appears in *John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. by Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: Macmillan, 1957). References to *The Reason of Church Government, Of Education, Areopagitica, A Treatise of Civil Power*, and *The Ready and Easy Way* are to page numbers of these works as they appear in *John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose*. References to *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* and *A Defence of the People of England* are to page numbers of these works as they appear in John Milton, *Political Writings*, ed. by Martin Dzelzainis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). References to all other prose works by Milton are to page numbers of these works as they appear in *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, ed. by Don M. Wolfe and others, 8 vols (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953–82): *Commonplace Book* in vol. I, *Of Reformation* in vol. I, *Eikonoklastes* in vol. III, *Second Defence of the English People* in vol. IV. 1, *The History of Britain* in vol. V. 1, and *Of Christian Doctrine* in vol. VI.

INTRODUCTION

On the same principles, his [Aristotle's] book on 'Ethics' is worse than any other book, being the direct opposite of God's grace, and the Christian virtues; yet it is accounted among the best of his works. Oh! Away with such books from any Christian hands.

Luther, *An Appeal to the Ruling Class*

Over the last twenty years, scholars from several different disciplines have interpreted Milton's poetry and prose in light of their understanding of seventeenth-century English political thought and English social, political, and military history. One of the results of this widespread practice has been a consensus that Milton's writings are, among other things, an expression of his commitment to English republicanism. In making this claim, however, these scholars work on different definitions of 'English republicanism'. Many use 'English republicanism' to mean the English commitment to kingless government. Others, such as J. G. A. Pocock, Blair Worden, and Jonathan Scott, use the expression to refer to complex 'ideas', 'concepts', 'visions', 'ideals', 'vocabularies', and 'theories' of citizenship and political society affirmed by authors who were both responding to and attempting to shape events from 1642 through to the Glorious Revolution.¹ Yet others, such

¹ J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), pp. 333–400; J. G. A. Pocock and Gordon J. Schochet, 'Interregnum and Restoration', in *The Varieties of British Political Thought, 1500–1800*, ed. by J. G. A. Pocock with the assistance of Gordon J. Schochet and Lois G. Schwoerer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 146–79; Blair Worden, 'English Republicanism', in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450–1700*, ed. by J. H. Burns with assistance of Mark Goldie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 443–75; Worden, 'Republicanism Regicide and Republic: The English Experience', in *Republicanism and Constitutionalism in Early Modern Europe*, vol. 1 of *Republicanism: A Shared European Heritage*, ed. by Martin van Gelderen and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp.

as David Norbrook, use this expression to denote an antiroyalist English culture that originated in the sixteenth century and developed on literary, besides philosophical and political, fronts over the course of the seventeenth century.² Given these different definitions of 'English republicanism', the claim that Milton's writings are expressions of his commitments to English republicanism can mean different things: in some cases it means simply that Milton's writings express his commitment to kingless government in England; in others it means that Milton's writings are part of a distinct body of works produced by authors such as Marchamont Nedham, Henry Neville, Henry Vane, James Harrington, and Algernon Sidney; in others it means that these writings display allegiances to a wide range of textual strategies, tastes, and values that developed over the course of the seventeenth century in England.

But pretty much all of those who have made the case for what they call the 'republicanism' of Milton and other seventeenth-century English authors agree that their writing and thinking are strongly informed by a tradition of thought running from Aristotle to Machiavelli and beyond. Indeed, the term 'republican' has come to be so widely used to describe the political thought of seventeenth-century authors such as Milton not because they frequently used this term to refer to themselves, but because they are seen to be so strongly influenced by what is now commonly referred to as 'the republican tradition' of political thought. And one of the main reasons the work of Pocock and Quentin Skinner features so prominently in the current interpretation of Milton as a republican is that, more than anyone else, they postulated the existence and defined the shape of that tradition. Given this consensus that, whatever its precise origins and contours may be, what is known as 'English republicanism' is strongly informed by republican tradition, one of the major components of the current consensus in Milton studies is thus the following proposition: Milton's political views are strongly influenced by and consistent in important ways with the thinking of figures such as Aristotle, Polybius, Cicero, Sallust, Livy, and Machiavelli.

307–27; Jonathan Scott, *England's Troubles: Seventeenth-Century English Political Instability in European Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Scott, 'Classical Republicanism in Seventeenth-Century England and the Netherlands', in *Republicanism and Constitutionalism in Early Modern Europe*, pp. 61–81; Scott, *Commonwealth Principles: Republican Writing of the English Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

² See David Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics, 1627–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). For similar views of seventeenth-century republican culture, see also Nigel Smith, *Literature and Revolution in England, 1640–1660* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994); Barbara Lewalski, 'Paradise Lost and Milton's Politics', *Milton Studies*, 38 (2000), 141–68.

Thus, in the chapter entitled ‘English Republicanism’ in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450–1700*, Worden’s view that ‘Milton’s republican values can be found not only in his prose but in his greatest poetry’ is based on an understanding of English republicanism as ‘a body of ideas’ that derives to a great extent from the ancients and Machiavelli:

[Aristotle’s] was the vocabulary with which seventeenth-century men studied the forms of government and conceived of politics as the pursuit of the good life. His account of constitutions was supplemented by Book VI of Polybius’ *Histories* — although this was an exclusive taste, not yet available in English. Plutarch’s *Lives*, which taught morality rather than theory, was a less demanding and more widely read work, the *Life* of Lyscurgus having a special interest for republicans. Cicero, who equipped them with a conception of political justice and of its relationship to good government, probably did more than anyone to shape their reading of Aristotle. Livy provided the essential map of Roman history, and struck a responsive chord with his lament for the lost virtues of an earlier age. Tacitus supplied vivid images of tyranny which the evils of Stuart rule were often held to reflect. The histories of Sallust and Quintilian were likewise keenly studied [...]. Republicans found their principal guide to antiquity in Machiavelli.³

In documenting Milton’s evolving republicanism from the regicide to the Restoration, Nicolas von Maltzahn, too, highlights the way in which his readings in Polybius, Livy, Cicero, Sallust, and Tacitus powerfully influenced not just the historiography of *The History of Britain* (1670), but also Milton’s views on liberty, patriotism, education, eloquence, and virtue which he developed in this and other prose works of the 1650s and early 1660s.⁴ Revising Zera Fink’s interpretation of Milton’s republicanism as being grounded primarily in Polybius’s account of the mixed constitution of ancient Rome, Martin Dzelzainis, in an essay that appeared in a prestigious anthology published in 1994, observes that ‘Aristotle, Sallust and, above all, Cicero [...] must be regarded as the main authorities from whom Milton derived his republican principles’.⁵ In the same volume of essays, David Armitage observes the ‘continuity’ of Milton’s ‘classical republicanism’ in his writings of the

³ Worden, ‘English Republicanism’, pp. 445–46.

⁴ Nicholas von Maltzahn, *Milton’s ‘History of Britain’: Republican Historiography in the English Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), and von Maltzahn, ‘From Pillar to Post: Milton and the Attack on Republican Humanism at the Restoration’, in *Soldiers, Writers and Statesmen of the English Revolution*, ed. by Ian Gentles, John Morrill, and Blair Worden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 265–85.

⁵ Martin Dzelzainis, ‘Milton’s Classical Republicanism’, in *Milton and Republicanism*, ed. by David Armitage, Armand Himy, and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 3–24 (p. 8).

1650s and 1660s on the basis of his observations of how in these writings Milton follows 'the Sallustian-Machiavellian analysis of the fatal temptations of empire for a newly liberated commonwealth'.⁶ Though he focuses much more on classical literary figures such as Lucan than philosophers and political theorists, Norbrook, too, observes many points of agreement and consistency between Milton and Polybius, Cicero, Livy, and especially Machiavelli.⁷ Reaffirming Norbrook's account of a republican culture, Barbara Lewalski presents a 'republican Milton' who is 'in the tradition of Plato, Aristotle, and Machiavelli'.⁸ The republican Milton yielded by Jonathan Scott's comprehensive account of republican writing of the English revolution is a function of Scott's understanding of English republicans as authors who promoted the revolutionary cause on the basis of a 'combination not only of Greek and Roman sources, but, more challengingly, of Plato and Machiavelli [. . .]. Universally present within this synthesis, and perhaps somehow anchoring it, was Aristotle'.⁹ Finally, Paul Rahe has recently weighed in with his verdict that Milton was 'a genuine, fully conscious classical republican' since he was fully committed to the vision of politics he found in those ancients listed by Worden.¹⁰

In making the case for Milton's republicanism, some of these scholars neglect the ways in which Milton's religious beliefs affect his thinking about politics and closely related matters. In his essay on Milton's classical republicanism, for example, Dzelzainis claims that Cicero's analysis of fortitude in *On Duties* is the 'blueprint' for Milton's 1644 tract *Of Education*, which 'represents something very close to a republican moment for Milton'.¹¹ One would never know from this attempt to align Milton's educational theory with classical *paideia* that in this tract Milton makes the rather un-Ciceronian claim that 'the end then of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him, as we may the nearest by possessing our souls of true virtue, which being united to the heavenly grace of faith makes up the highest perfection'.¹² It is this kind of neglect which Scott observes when, in an

⁶ David Armitage, 'John Milton: Poet Against Empire', in *Milton and Republicanism*, ed. by Armitage, Skinner, and Himy, pp. 206–25 (p. 215).

⁷ Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic*.

⁸ Lewalski, 'Paradise Lost and Milton's Politics', p. 142.

⁹ Scott, *Commonwealth Principles*, p. 39.

¹⁰ Paul Rahe, 'The Classical Republicanism of John Milton', *History of Political Thought*, 25 (2004), 243–75 (p. 247).

¹¹ Dzelzainis, 'Milton's Classical Republicanism', pp. 13–14.

¹² Milton, *Of Education*, p. 631.

essay that appeared in a major anthology published in 2002, he claims that ‘the greatest shortcoming of the existing literature on English republicanism’ is ‘the relative neglect of its religious dimension’.¹³ Attempting to redress this shortcoming in his recent work, Scott does indeed observe the religious component of English republican thought and improves upon those accounts that ignore or minimize it. But for Scott, the English republicans ‘combine’ and ‘integrate’ the religious component with the ancient and Machiavellian components to produce a ‘synthesis’: ‘alongside its Graeco-Roman-Machiavellian synthesis’, he writes, ‘a no less general feature of English republican writing is its Christian-classical synthesis’.¹⁴ Though, as we will see, he removes Machiavelli from the equation, and though he regards Milton as something of an anomaly within English republicanism, Rahe agrees with Scott’s assessment of how Milton’s commitments to classical republicanism are related to his Protestant faith: ‘Milton was not only steeped in the pagan classics; he professed to think it perfectly possible to reconcile the vision of politics found in Herodotus, Thucydides, Aristotle, Polybius, Sallust, Cicero, Seneca, Suetonius and Tacitus with the demands of a Christianity fully and properly reformed, and in both his poetry and his prose he consciously modeled himself on the *vir sapiens* of Cicero’s rhetorical works.’¹⁵ In a similar vein, Blair Worden observes that ‘Puritan merits of frugality and self-denial blended easily in his [Milton’s] mind with classical and pagan conceptions of austere public spirit and of civic aptitude’, and that in his ‘hymns to the regicide’ Milton ‘merged, with no sense of strain, the Aristotelian and the Old Testament conceptions of “justice”’.¹⁶ The view (or assumption) that it is possible to bring Protestant and pagan outlooks

¹³ Scott, ‘Classical Republicanism in Seventeenth-Century England and the Netherlands’, p. 61. For further objections of this kind, see Paul Marshall, ‘Quentin Skinner and the Secularization of Political Thought’, *Studies in Political Thought*, 2 (1993), 85–104; Paul Stevens, ‘Milton’s “Renunciation” of Cromwell: The Problem of Raleigh’s *Cabinet-Council*’, *Modern Philology*, 98 (2001), 363–92; Walter Lim, *John Milton, Radical Politics, and Biblical Republicanism* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2006); J. C. D. Clark, ‘Barbarism, Religion and the History of Political Thought’, in *The Political Imagination in History: Essays Concerning J. G. A. Pocock*, ed. by D. N. DeLuna (Baltimore: Archangel, 2006), pp. 211–29 (pp. 216–17).

¹⁴ Scott, *Commonwealth Principles*, p. 44.

¹⁵ Rahe, ‘Classical Republicanism of John Milton’, p. 248.

¹⁶ Blair Worden, *Literature and Politics in Cromwellian England: John Milton, Andrew Marvell, Marchamont Nedham* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 161–63. Though he observes some ‘tensions’ between the biblical and ancient heathen components of Milton’s political thought, Lim takes a similar position regarding Milton’s republicanism in *John Milton, Radical Politics, and Biblical Republicanism*.

on politics into some kind of synthesis and that Milton in fact did so, is, moreover, the prevailing view amongst the literary critics who see Milton as a republican.

As several of the citations above indicate, these interpretations of Milton's republicanism are often extended to comprehend *Paradise Lost*. Rather than surrendering his Graeco/Roman/Machiavellian/Protestant republicanism on the occasion of the failure of the commonwealth experiment in which he was so deeply involved, that is, Milton, it is now widely believed, continued to espouse it in powerful, if sometimes oblique, ways in his great epic. Indeed, Milton, according to some of these critics, says so himself in the poem: though, as he observes in the invocation to Book VII, he has 'fall'n on evil days' by the time he composes the poem in the late 1650s and early 1660s, he will 'Sing with mortal voice, unchang'd / To hoarse or mute' (VII. 24–25), which is to say, according to a common reading of these lines, that he will continue to affirm his brand of English republican ideology.¹⁷ One of the important implications of the view that he did so is that his entire oeuvre is in important ways consistent and homogeneous. As Lewalski puts it in her commentary on the politics of *Paradise Lost*, 'early to late, [Milton] continued his efforts to educate his countrymen to the moral and political virtues he thought necessary to sustain a republican commonwealth'.¹⁸ Another important implication is that

¹⁷ For this reading of these lines, see Christopher Hill, *Milton and the English Revolution* (New York: Penguin, 1977), p. 365; David Loewenstein, *Representing Revolution in Milton and his Contemporaries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 240; Annabel Patterson, *Reading Between the Lines* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 256. For more readings of *Paradise Lost* as an expression of Milton's republicanism, see Perez Zagorin, *Milton, Aristocrat and Rebel: The Poet and his Politics* (Rochester: Brewer, 1992), pp. 129–31; Lydia Dittler Schulman, 'Paradise Lost' and the Rise of the American Republic (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992); Roger Lejosne, 'Milton, Satan, Salmasius and Abdiel', in *Milton and Republicanism*, ed. by Armitage, Skinner, and Himy, pp. 106–17; Armand Himy 'Paradise Lost as a Republican "Tractatus Theological-Politicus"', in *Milton and Republicanism*, ed. by Armitage, Skinner, and Himy, pp. 118–34; Peter Lindenbaum, 'John Milton and the Republican Mode of Literary Production', in *Critical Essays on John Milton*, ed. by Christopher Kendrick (New York: G. K. Hall, 1995), pp. 149–64; Barbara Riebling, 'Milton on Machiavelli: Representations of the State in *Paradise Lost*', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 49 (1996), 573–94; Nigel Smith, 'Paradise Lost from Civil War to Restoration', in *The Cambridge Companion to Writing of the English Revolution*, ed. by N. H. Keeble (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 251–67; John Coffey, 'Pacifist, Quietist, or Patient Militant? John Milton and the Restoration', *Milton Studies*, 42 (2003), 149–74.

¹⁸ Lewalski, 'Paradise Lost and Milton's Politics', p. 143. See also Zagorin, *Milton, Aristocrat and Rebel*, p. 131; David Loewenstein, 'Milton and the Poetics of Defense', in *Politics, Poetics, and Hermeneutics in Milton's Prose*, ed. by David Loewenstein and James Grantham Turner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 171–92; Worden, *Literature and Politics in Cromwellian England*, p. 396.

Milton's assertion of republicanism in *Paradise Lost* and the other late poems clearly establishes his credentials as a hero, an Abdiel who bore witness in public to his longstanding beliefs, though worlds had come to judge him perverse.

This case for Milton's republicanism in the poetry and the prose has greatly changed and deepened our understanding of the nature and sources of Milton's political thought. In addition, in many cases it also confirms that the version of Christianity with which the commitments to the ancients and Machiavelli are seen to coexist cannot reasonably be seen to be 'mainstream' but is heterodox — indeed, heretical. Thus, in documenting Milton's republicanism, Norbrook and Lewalski observe Milton's Arminianism and antitrinitarianism.¹⁹ However, in a very important way the current consensus remains within the broad parameters established by the old reading of Milton as a Christian humanist. For that reading was grounded in an understanding of Milton's writings as the culmination of — to use the words of Douglas Bush — 'the tradition of classical reason and culture fused with Christian faith', and it is this view of Milton as a writer who fuses Christian with classical (but also Machiavellian) sources which is at the heart of the current understanding of 'Milton's republicanism'.²⁰

¹⁹ See Lewalski, 'Paradise Lost and Milton's Politics', pp. 149, 158. Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic*, p. 479. For some of the major accounts of Milton's heretical religious beliefs (ones which are not tied to the case for Milton's republicanism), see Denis Saurat, *Milton, Man and Thinker* (New York: Dial Press, 1925); Maurice Kelley, *This Great Argument: A Study of Milton's 'De Doctrina Christiana' as a Gloss upon 'Paradise Lost'* (Gloucester, MA: P. Smith, 1941; repr. 1962); Balachandra Rajan, *'Paradise Lost' and the Seventeenth-Century Reader* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1947); Maurice Kelley, 'Introduction', in John Milton, *Of Christian Doctrine*, vol. VI: *Complete Prose Works* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), pp. 43–99; Hill, *Milton and the English Revolution*; Michael Bauman, *Milton's Arianism* (Frankfurt: P. Lang, 1986); John P. Rumrich, 'Milton's Arianism: Why it Matters', in *Milton and Heresy*, ed. by Stephen Dobranski and John Rumrich (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 75–92; Stephen M. Fallon, "'Elect above the rest": Theology as Self-representation in Milton', in *Milton and Heresy*, ed. by Dobranski and Rumrich, pp. 93–116; Martin Dzelzainis, 'Milton and Antitrinitarianism', in *Milton and Toleration*, ed. by Sharon Achinstein and Elizabeth Sauer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 171–85.

²⁰ Douglas Bush, *English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century 1600–1660*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1945; repr. 1962), p. 378. For Scott's explicit identification of the 'synthesis' of pagan and Christian views he finds in Milton and the English republicans as a 'Christian humanism', see *England's Troubles*, pp. 319, 323, 296; *Commonwealth Principles*, pp. 44, 156, 166. For a more comprehensive definition of Christian humanism as an activist social ideology, but one that was still grounded in a combination of biblical and ancient pagan Greek and Roman sources, see Margo Todd, *Christian Humanism and the Puritan Social Order* (Cambridge:

* * *

In this study, I seek to contribute to our understanding of *Paradise Lost* by providing a comprehensive account of what the poem says and implies about politics very broadly conceived. On the basis of this account, and a more rigorous description of republican tradition than those currently in play, I also seek to improve our understanding of the poem by showing that while Milton here adopts some tenets of ancient and Florentine republicanism, on many fundamental issues he differs from and, indeed, openly repudiates it. He does so on the basis of a heterodox Protestant world-view which he presents as being incompatible with both ancient and Machiavellian republicanism. This account of how Milton's poem is related to republican tradition and why it is related to it as it is serves as the basis for my argument that the current understanding of *Paradise Lost* as an expression of Milton's republicanism is untenable. Like Richard Strier, I also seek to show the inadequacy of the current reading of the poem as an expression of Christian humanism, but for reasons which are entirely different from those offered by him: whereas Strier finds 'the effect of synthesis' in Milton's writings to mask a commitment to 'classical rather than Christian' values,²¹ I find the commitment to Christian values in this poem to underlie not just departures from but open hostility towards the ancients and Machiavelli. Since, as I observe along the way, the ancients and Machiavelli strongly inform Milton's *History of Britain* and the major political prose, it follows that Milton's oeuvre is not homogeneous and consistent in the ways many now claim it is. And since, at least according to some of the most comprehensive descriptions of it, the ancients and Machiavelli strongly inform English republican ideology at large, it follows that Milton's epic is not a further expression of his commitment to that ideology either. In addition, I argue that it is only in relation to modern conceptions of politics and religion, as opposed to seventeenth-century conceptions of them, that Milton's repudiation of classical republicanism in his poem and his affirmation of politics conceived along heterodox Protestant

Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 22–52. For a slightly different definition of Christian humanism in terms of commitments to Christian political activism and 'a faith in right reason', and the argument that Milton was a radical Christian humanist of this kind, see Joan Bennett, *Reviving Liberty: Radical Christian Humanism in Milton's Great Poems* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989). For further accounts of Milton's humanism, see von Maltzahn, 'From Pillar to Post', and Lindenbaum, 'John Milton and the Republican Mode of Literary Production', p. 160.

²¹ Richard Strier, 'Milton Against Humility', in *Religion and Culture in Renaissance England*, ed. by Claire McEachern and Debora Shuger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 258–86 (p. 258).

lines would compromise the integrity that the current consensus ascribes to him. Finally, I seek to preserve the hard Protestant quality of the poem which I find so bracing, but which is watered down by those readings that turn the epic poet into a Ciceronian champion of human dignity and civil liberty.

While much of the literary critical commentary on Milton's republicanism proceeds on the premise that republicanism constitutes a distinct and coherent tradition in western political thought (as suggested by Pocock and Skinner), much of the recent scholarship on the matter by historians of political thought has argued that Pocock and Skinner are mistaken on many counts and that the tradition is much more diverse and much less distinct from other traditions (such as the juridical tradition) than they suggest. Indeed, the existence and shape of republican tradition continues to be a matter of widespread and intense debate.²² The project of understanding how a poem such as *Paradise Lost* is related to some of the main figures in the republican tradition of thought must thus take sides in a number of debates merely in order to establish a description of this tradition which could serve as the basis for the analysis. The only way of doing so in a rigorous and critical manner, as far as I can see, is by going to the primary texts and assessing them, and the relationships between them, in light of some of the scholarly commentary on them. This is why I give what may seem to some to be an excessive amount of attention to Aristotle, Polybius, Cicero, Sallust, Livy, and Machiavelli. The detailed consideration of the republicans, that is, is a product of a methodological commitment, an idea about how one must proceed in order to provide a rich and persuasive account of how the epic is related to some major figures in a tradition of political thought.

This description of republican tradition also derives from observations, presented at the opening of each chapter, of how historians of political thought have used the term 'republicanism' to refer to views about not just one particular issue, but at least five. That is to say that I work towards a description of republican tradition (and an explanation of what I mean by 'republicanism') by taking seriously the ways in which historians of political thought have used the term 'republicanism' to refer to views about not only the forms of government, but also human

²² For summaries of the major developments in the recent discussion, see James Hankins, 'Introduction', in *Renaissance Civic Humanism*, ed. by James Hankins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 1–13; Scott, *Commonwealth Principles*, pp. 19–40; Eric Nelson, *The Greek Tradition in Republican Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 1–18; J. A. W. Gunn, 'Republican Virtue Reconsidered, Or a Sop to Cerberus', in *Political Imagination in History*, ed. by DeLuna, pp. 101–28.

nature, virtue, civil liberty, and history. Working on the basic premise that there is indeed some kind of tradition in which Aristotle, Polybius, Livy, Cicero, Sallust, and Machiavelli participate, and acknowledging how this tradition has been described in terms of treatments of five broad issues, I thus structure my account of republican tradition by isolating what some of the major figures in it say about each issue and analysing how what each figure says is related to what the others say.

My principal aim in establishing what I take to be a more comprehensive and complex description of republican tradition is to understand something about Milton's poem — how it is related to some of the major figures in the tradition of political thought that strongly influences his own political writings and those of his political allies. However, I also aim to make a contribution to the history of political thought which is independent of whatever contribution I may make to our understanding of Milton's poem. In almost all cases, this amounts to confirming and endorsing one side in key debates in the history of political thought, though the final vision of the tradition, towards which I work in each chapter and which I present in its entirety in the concluding chapter, is I think idiosyncratic. Thus, against those who find in the major republicans a repudiation of monarchy, I side with those who find a strong antiformalism in their constitutional thought. I corroborate Rahe's argument that it is misleading to contrast Aristotelian with Roman political thought in the way Skinner sometimes does. By considering in some detail the writings of Cicero and Sallust, I argue that it is misleading to speak, as Skinner and his followers do, as though these two figures affirm the same Roman theory and ideal of liberty — in some respects, their positions are antithetical. I try to show that though Machiavelli displays commitments to ancient Greek and Roman ideas of human nature and virtue, Rahe is right to observe that he breaks from them and is therefore not the kind of transitional figure both Skinner and Pocock have made him out to be. And I take issue with scholars such as Philip Pettit who think of republican tradition in terms of figures who always work on a particular 'concept' of liberty, a way of thinking about the tradition which has powerfully affected Skinner's recent writings on it.

I also wish to draw attention to the difficulties of identifying coherent doctrine in the writings of single major figures in the tradition: while he sometimes speaks of glory as the end of human existence, for example, Cicero also sometimes speaks as though a virtuous life within a political society and the welfare of that society as a whole are the ends. And while he sometimes speaks as though monarchy is inconsistent with civil liberty, he often speaks as though it is not. Machiavelli's major writings, on my analysis, are marked by tensions and ambiguities throughout. On a more general level, the view of republican tradition for which I argue is both

indebted to and supports scholars such as Cary Nederman, Paul Rahe, and Eric Nelson who emphasize the diversity within the tradition, though, as we will see, these scholars understand this diversity in very different and in some cases incompatible ways. Finally, the family resemblance conception of the tradition which, on the basis of all of my observations taken together, I propose in the conclusion, I think has several advantages over current conceptions of the tradition in terms of the iteration of a single theory, concept, idea, or proposition.

My reading of *Paradise Lost* is based on the proposition that in writing and publishing it, one of the things Milton intended to do was to express some views and teach his readers some things about human nature, virtue, forms of government, civil liberty, and history. Reading the poem on this premise, I take something of a middle way between critics such as Robert Fallon and the historicists. Thus I do not accept Fallon's argument that, as a poem about 'universal spiritual values', 'spiritual truth', and a 'spiritual theme', *Paradise Lost* says nothing about either seventeenth-century English history or 'how men should govern men'.²³ One problem with this view is that, as many have noted, Milton seems to go out of his way to describe heavenly society in terms which were commonly used in the seventeenth century to describe how humans should and should not govern humans. Some of the basic principles of heavenly politics, moreover, are those espoused by Milton in his political prose. Authoritative characters in the poem, such as Raphael, on occasion claim that the condition of angels in heaven is the same in important respects as the condition of all rational agents. Given all of this, it does not seem unreasonable to understand Milton's representation of heaven as one that carries some implications for terrestrial ethics and politics. Fallon's segregation of 'poetry' from 'political testament',²⁴ moreover, does not seem true to Milton's own citation of a wide range of poetry, both ancient and modern, as evidence for the propositions he forwards in his major political prose works. Finally, for Milton, 'spiritual themes' do not appear to exclude subjects such as virtue, how humans ought to treat each other in society, the nature of man, the value of freedoms from rulers to administer justice and worship as one wishes, and the nature and significance of individual and collective human existence in this world. Indeed, the spiritual education of Adam and the reader with which the poem concludes includes lessons which explicitly and literally address these issues. Even granted that

²³ See Robert Fallon, *Divided Empire: Milton's Political Imagery* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), pp. ix, xiii, 22, xii.

²⁴ Fallon, *Divided Empire*, p. ix.

the main themes of the poem are religious or 'spiritual', that is, it is still reasonable to understand it as one that presents views and teachings about those major issues, positions on which I take to define republican tradition.

I do, however, take Fallon's point that the fact that Milton *draws on* his life in politics and seventeenth-century English military and political history in writing this poem does not necessarily mean that the poem is really *about* these things. In addition, some of the historicists' argumentation for ideological content and topical reference and polemic is surely questionable. Norbrook, for example, claims, essentially on grounds of the *similarity* he finds between the Machiavellian legislator and Milton's God/Son, that Milton's description of the latter amounts to an extended description of and meditation on the former as embodied in the English Protector of the 1650s.²⁵ One could, first of all, reasonably challenge this observation of resemblance by observing the obvious differences between Machiavelli's legislator (exemplars of which are the fratricide Romulus and the mass murderer Cleomenes) and Milton's God/Son. But even given the resemblance, it does not follow that Milton is referring to and assessing Machiavelli's legislator, and seventeenth-century English speculations on him, in describing God and the Son as he does. The assumption that is needed to make good the argument here is that Milton deliberately refers to and comments on events and personages in seventeenth-century English history whenever he literally names and describes things that resemble them. Given recent scholarship on the conditions, including censorship, under which Milton was writing the poem,²⁶ it seems reasonable to think that Milton *sometimes* comments on seventeenth-century English history by way of describing people and events that, especially to seventeenth-century readers, would be seen to bear obvious resemblances to people and events that feature in seventeenth-century English history. And on this view, some of the 'parallels', 'analogies', and 'resemblances' observed by Norbrook and others inform what Milton says and teaches about politics in this poem.

But some of the parallels cited by the historicists, such as that between the Son and Machiavelli's Cleomenes, strike me as being tendentious, other more obvious

²⁵ Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic*, pp. 469–80.

²⁶ See Hill, *Milton and the English Revolution*; Neil H. Keeble, *The Literary Culture of Non-conformity in Later Seventeenth-Century England* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987); Loewenstein, *Representing Revolution*; Patterson, *Reading Between the Lines*; Smith, *Literature and Revolution in England*; Sharon Achinstein, *Milton and the Revolutionary Reader* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Laura Lunger Knoppers, *Historicizing Milton: Spectacle, Power and Poetry in Restoration England* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994).

ones are neglected or simply negated, and the interpretations of many of them seem calculated to serve preformulated agendas, especially that of making the poem into one that is really about seventeenth-century England and one that is au fond an expression of Milton's republicanism.²⁷ In addition, given Milton's explicit statements in the poem and elsewhere concerning what he is trying to do, some of these parallels seem to be calculated not so much to refer to as simply to bring to mind conditions in seventeenth-century England. As Neil Keeble puts it in commenting on the much observed similarity between Satan and Charles I, 'the tyranny of Milton's Satan might, to those so minded, recall Charles I, but it is Satan, not Charles, who is described'. So while not wishing to deny what Keeble refers to as the poem's 'inescapable contemporary references',²⁸ I generally take a more literal-minded approach to the poem than Norbrook and some other historicists do.

Though informed by and greatly indebted to some of the vast commentary on this poem, this approach yields some new results because it is directed in part by the categories and sub-categories I find useful in attempting to provide an account of some major aspects of republican tradition. Thus, in the first chapter, my reading of the poem aims to identify how it describes the human animal and the meaning, end, and purpose of its existence; how Milton understands the ways of living which permit this end to be achieved; and how he sees the relation between moral virtue and this achievement. Chapter 2 aims to establish an understanding of the poem's definition of moral virtue for the human animal; the preconditions it sets for the virtuous life; the significance and value the poem assigns to that life in relation to the individual, other members of that individual's political society, and other humans at large; and the poem's view of the effective means of instilling and maintaining virtue. In the third chapter I attempt to identify what may reasonably be inferred from the poem about forms of government. The reading of the poem presented in Chapter 4 aims to understand how characters in the poem use the terms 'liberty' and 'freedom' when they are discussing political societies, the poem's identification of the preconditions for the existence of civil liberty, the value Milton assigns to civil liberty, and his views about the extent to which members of political societies should enjoy civil liberty. And my observations in the final chapter constitute an account of what may reasonably be inferred from the poem about Milton's perception of the importance of the political, social, and military history

²⁷ For a more detailed presentation of these objections, see William Walker, 'Resemblance and Reference in Recent Criticism on *Paradise Lost*', *Milton Quarterly*, 40 (2006), 189–206.

²⁸ Keeble, *Literary Culture of Nonconformity*, pp. 119, 231.

of Greece, Rome, Israel, and Britain; his understanding of the causes of human experience at large; his vision of the overall shape of this experience; and his ideas about the meaning and value human experience over the long run may have for humans. By reading the poem along these lines, I aim not only to support my major claims, but also to provide some fresh perspectives on what it says about politics very broadly conceived.

HUMAN NATURE

For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

John 12. 43

Republican Tradition

Though scholars of republican political thought seldom see it as a philosophy of human nature, many recognize that an understanding of human nature serves as a crucial premise of arguments concerning forms of government, liberty, history, and virtue which are more commonly thought of as the essentials of this tradition. Throughout his great book, J. G. A. Pocock, for example, emphasizes that what he takes to be the republican tradition is grounded in ‘the ancient notions of *virtus*, of the *zōon politikon* whose nature was to rule, to act, to make decisions’, and who reached its fulfilment in citizenship.¹ Quentin Skinner, on the other hand, claims that republican and, more broadly, neo-Roman tradition is grounded in a rejection of this Aristotelian understanding of man as an animal that has natural ends or purposes, political or otherwise: the republicans ‘never argue [...] that we are moral beings with certain determinate purposes, and thus that we are only in the fullest sense in possession of our liberty when these purposes are realized’.² Machiavelli’s republicanism is, moreover, grounded in his view that some vices are ‘deeply rooted in human nature’ and that there is ‘a natural tendency in

¹ Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, p. 335.

² Quentin Skinner, ‘The Republican Ideal of Political Liberty’, in *Machiavelli and Republicanism*, ed. by Gisela Bock, Quentin Skinner, and Maurizio Viroli (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 293–309 (pp. 307–08).

mankind towards *corruzione*'.³ Cary Nederman identifies different strands in republican tradition in part by way of identifying different concepts of human nature and their implications in the writings of Cicero, several medieval thinkers, and Machiavelli.⁴ Taking issue in various ways with all of these scholars, Paul Rahe argues that 'the classical republican argument, articulated by Aristotle and Cicero on the basis of their observation of Greek and Roman practice, was grounded in the conviction that the distinctive human feature is man's capacity for moral and political rationality'. On the basis of this claim and his reading of Machiavelli's principal works, he insists that the Florentine must be differentiated from the classical republicans, both Greek and Roman, since he does not share with them this understanding of what man is:

when Machiavelli jettisons natural teleology, he abandons the central tenet of classical republicanism. To be precise, he rejects the common Greek and Roman conviction that man is a political animal and that his political character stems from his capacity to discern and make clear to others in rational speech the linkage between the advantageous, the just, and the good.⁵

There is thus considerable disagreement amongst historians of political thought over precisely how republicans view human nature, but there is strong agreement that a view on this issue is a major component of their thinking about politics. In order to understand how *Paradise Lost* stands in relation to this thinking, it is thus necessary to determine what the republican understanding of human nature is, and then to compare it with the complex vision of human nature that this poem presents. Though Skinner and others have expressed reservations about Pocock's treatment of Aristotle as a figure in the tradition, the reasons they provide for

³ Quentin Skinner, 'Machiavelli on *virtù* and the Maintenance of Liberty', in *Renaissance Virtues*, vol. II of *Visions of Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 160–85 (pp. 168–69).

⁴ Cary Nederman, 'Rhetoric, Reason, and Republic: Republicanisms – Ancient, Medieval, and Modern', in *Renaissance Civic Humanism*, ed. by Hankins, pp. 247–69. See also 'The Puzzle of the Political Animal: Nature and Artifice in Aristotle's Political Theory', *Review of Politics*, 56 (1994), 283–304, and his earlier essays which emphasize the differences between understandings of human nature and the origins of political society in Cicero and Aristotle, collected in his *Medieval Aristotelianism and its Limits* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1997).

⁵ Paul Rahe, 'Situating Machiavelli', in *Renaissance Civic Humanism*, ed. by Hankins, pp. 270–308 (pp. 292, 305). Jonathan Scott confirms much of Rahe's account of the substance and importance of the classical understanding of human nature in terms of passion and reason, and Machiavelli's departure from it, in 'Classical Republicanism in Seventeenth-Century England and the Netherlands', *England's Troubles*, pp. 290–324.

doing so, as we will see, are weak: it is not the case that those whom Skinner takes to be republicans never argue that we are moral beings with specific purposes. Since, in addition, many of the other leading scholars on the subject share Pocock's sense that the Greek does belong to a group of thinkers to which it is fair to refer as a 'tradition',⁶ we will take him to be part of it and begin to work towards a description of that tradition on this premise.

* * *

In the first book of the *Politics*, Aristotle introduces the claim that man is a political animal (*zōon politikon*) by way of a famous argument for the naturalness of the *polis* (which Jowett translates as 'state' but which others translate as 'political society'):

When several villages are united in a single complete community, large enough to be nearly or quite self-sufficing, the state comes into existence, originating in the bare needs of life, and continuing in existence for the sake of a good life. And therefore, if the earlier forms of society are natural, so is the state, for it is the end of them, and the nature of a thing is its end. For what each thing is when fully developed, we call its nature, whether we are speaking of a man, a horse, or a family. Besides, the final cause and end of a thing is the best, and to be self-sufficing is the end and the best.

Hence it is evident that the state is a creation of nature, and that man is by nature a political animal. And he who by nature and not by mere accident is without a state, is either a bad man or above humanity. (*P* 1252b27–1253a4)

In this extraordinarily controversial passage, Aristotle begins to present his account of political society as one within which humans pursue the good life or happiness (*eudaimonia*). Since the end (*telos*) of human societies is the political society, and since Aristotle here defines the nature of a thing in terms of its end, human societies are by nature political societies. By this Aristotle means neither that human societies are founded with the purpose of achieving happiness, nor that all forms of human society are political societies, but that human societies are most fully developed and reach their best form only when they are societies of men pursuing and actually living the good life. Aristotle then seems to infer from this fact that all men are political animals. In this context, this proposition appears to mean not that all men actually live within societies for the sake of the good life, but as Keyt argues, 'that nature endows man with a latent capacity for civic virtue (*politikē aretē*) and an impulse to live in a polis'.⁷ This interpretation would be compatible

⁶ See Worden, 'English Republicanism'; Rahe, 'Situating Machiavelli'; Scott, *Commonwealth Principles*; Nelson, *Greek Tradition in Republican Thought*.

⁷ David Keyt, 'Three Basic Theorems in Aristotle's *Politics*', in *A Companion to Aristotle's Politics*, ed. by David Keyt and F. D. Miller, Jr (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), pp. 118–41 (p. 125). That

with Aristotle's later more general claims that 'a social instinct is implanted in all men by nature' (*P* 1253a29–30) and that, 'because man is by nature a political animal [...] men, even when they do not require one another's help, desire to live together' (*P* 1278b17–21). If this is correct, it seems that Aristotle is also claiming that humans can not reach their fullest development — that they cannot 'perfect' themselves as he later says (*P* 1253a31, 1280b35) — unless they live in societies pursuing the good life. That is to say that Aristotle here seems to say that, being political animals, humans need to exist within political societies in order to achieve their ends, where those ends are defined in terms of the full development and perfection of what they are by nature. Even when an individual is fulfilled and perfected, however, he is not self-sufficient. Self-sufficiency is a quality only of fulfilled and perfected human societies, except for individuals who are gods or beasts.

Aristotle indicates on several occasions in the *Politics* that it is in his major ethical work, the *Nicomachean Ethics*, that he most comprehensively defines what the good life is for this political animal. Having established in the first book of this work that for humans 'the chief good', that for the sake of which men act, is happiness (*eudaimonia*), Aristotle seeks to explain what he means by 'happiness' (*NE* 1129b25–1130a14). He does so by identifying 'the function [*ergon*] of man' (*NE* 1097b23–34). Among the main things that Aristotle sees as determining the function of a thing is that thing's nature, the way in which its components are related to each other, the quality of each of the components, and the way in which these components are related to those of other things. This is why, in attempting to identify the function of man, he says 'we are seeking what is peculiar to man' (*NE* 1097b23–35). Since Aristotle sees man as being naturally endowed with rational principle, since rational principle is the best thing in him, since no other earthly species is so endowed, and since the gods are also so endowed (but more richly so), he states that 'the function of man is an activity of soul which follows or implies a rational principle' (*NE* 1098a7–8). On the basis of this understanding of the function of man, and the premise that 'any action is well performed when

Aristotle's account of the *zōon politikon* means that man's nature is not merely social but political, that it 'suits us for life in the polis', and that 'a well-lived life for a human being is lived not only with family and friends but with fellow citizens as well' is also observed by Richard Kraut in 'Nature in Aristotle's Ethics and Politics', in *Freedom, Reason, and the Polis: Essays in Ancient Greek Political Philosophy*, ed. by David Keyt and Fred D. Miller, Jr (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 199–219 (p. 202). On 'the innate desire [*orexis*] for living together', see also Wolfgang Kullmann, 'Man as a Political Animal in Aristotle', in *Companion to Aristotle's 'Politics'*, ed. by Keyt and Miller, pp. 94–117 (pp. 102–03).

it is performed in accordance with the appropriate excellence' or virtue, Aristotle further argues that 'human good turns out to be activity of soul in accordance with virtue, and if there are more than one virtue, in accordance with the best and most complete' (*NE* 1097b22–1098a18). And Aristotle does indeed explicitly claim on several occasions in both the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics* that happiness, which is the chief good for man, consists in the life of virtue (*P* 1295a36–39, 1323b21–24, 1323b40–1324a2, 1325b14–16, 1328a38–39, 1329a21–25).

But what is the life of virtue for the political, rational animal? Aristotle answers this question by way of an elaborate account of human nature as a 'composite nature' (*NE* 1177b28, 1178a19), something that is made up of body and soul, where the soul has an irrational and a rational element. The irrational element consists of a 'nutritive' or 'vegetative' element and an 'appetitive' element; the rational element consists of a 'scientific' element and a 'calculative' or 'practical' element (*NE* 1102a26–1103a). By virtue of the scientific element, 'we contemplate the kind of things whose originaive causes are invariable', while by virtue of the calculative element 'we contemplate variable things' (*NE* 1139a6–9; the distinction is drawn again in *P* 1333a17–25). There are two main kinds of virtues of the soul which may be defined in terms of the standing of its various elements and how they are related to each other: the virtues of character (which Aristotle sometimes also calls the moral or practical virtues) and the virtues of intellect. Among the moral virtues are courage, temperance, liberality, magnificence, good temper, truthfulness, ready-wittedness, righteous indignation, pride (or magnanimity), and justice. Aristotle understands these moral virtues as virtues of the appetitive, desiring part of the soul which, though part of the irrational part of the soul and though sometimes resisting and opposing rational principle, yet shares in rational principle 'insofar as it listens to and obeys it' (*NE* 1102b30–32, 1117b20–23). He describes these moral virtues as 'states of character', where a state of character (*hexis*) is that 'in virtue of which we stand well or badly with reference to' passions such as fear and anger. To stand badly in reference to a passion is to feel it too weakly or too strongly, and to stand well with reference to a passion is to 'feel it moderately' (*NE* 1105b19–29). Moral virtue, that is, 'is a mean between two vices, the one involving excess, the other deficiency, and [...] it is such because its character is to aim at what is intermediate in passions and in actions' (*NE* 1109a20–23).

Though we are adapted by nature to receive these states of character which constitute the moral virtues, though we have a potential or capacity (*dunamis*) for them, we do not possess or come to possess them by nature; we acquire them mainly by way of the repeated performance of those particular actions to which the moral virtues would dispose us (*NE* 1103a14–25). Thus, 'the [moral] virtues we

get by first exercising them, as also happens in the case of the arts as well. For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them, e.g. men become builders by building and lyre-players by playing the lyre; so too we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts' (NE 1103a32–1103b2). Since the repeated performance of actions of a particular kind is habitual action or produces a habit within us, Aristotle says that 'moral virtue comes about as a result of habit' (NE 1103a14–1103b26). Once we have these moral virtues, not only are we disposed to act in accordance with them — to act temperately, liberally, courageously, justly — but we also desire to do so and take pleasure in doing so (NE 1104b3–14).

However strongly established our states of character may be, however powerfully *disposed* we may feel by virtue of these states to perform a particular action, they never simply cause us to perform that action, and we still must always *choose* to perform an action in order to act virtuously. This choosing or choice (*prohairesis*) that for Aristotle is an essential element of the morally virtuous action sets us apart from animals and qualifies the life of moral virtue as a kind of reasoning well. For, not having rational principle, animals are incapable of choice which 'involves a rational principle and thought' (NE 1112a16–17). More specifically, choosing is an activity of deciding upon a course of action that is within our power, an activity we properly perform in accordance with our states of character and a desire we form as a result of a process of deliberation (*boulēsis*). Deliberation is an exercise not of the scientific element of the rational part of the soul, but of the calculative, practical element, for it is reasoning about 'things that can be done by [our] own efforts' (NE 1112a33–34) and which can serve as means to an end: 'the end, then, being what we wish for, the means what we deliberate about and choose, actions concerning means must be according to choice and voluntary' (NE 1113b3–5). The particular way in which desire enters into this is explained by Aristotle as follows: 'the object of choice being one of the things in our own power which is desired after deliberation, choice will be deliberate desire of things in our own power; for when we have decided as a result of deliberation, we desire in accordance with our deliberation' (NE 1113a10–12). As Nederman puts it in his more detailed consideration of this issue, '*prohairesis* is the outcome of desire and intellect acting together in order to achieve an end'.⁸ So crucial an aspect of the human condition is this for Aristotle that he at one point identifies man with it: 'man is a moving principle of actions' (NE 1112b32; see also NE 1139b3–5). He also makes one major addition to his earlier account of choice by emphasizing that one

⁸ Nederman, 'Puzzle of the Political Animal', p. 291.

of the intellectual virtues is essential to this act of deliberation performed by calculative reason: *phronēsis*, which Ross translates as ‘practical wisdom’ but which some others translate as ‘prudence’, is the virtue of the calculative part of the rational part of the soul which permits us to deliberate well, and this intellectual virtue is therefore essential to our ability to exercise moral virtue.

It is because the exercise of the moral virtues is in accordance with part of the rational principle in us that it can count as a fulfilment of the function or work of mankind and qualify as a happy life. This life of moral or practical virtue is in accordance with the rational principle in the sense that it is an activity that is in accordance with calculative reason’s virtue of practical wisdom, but also in the sense that it is an activity which is in accordance with the rational principle in which the appetitive part of the soul itself shares. As Richard Mulgan and others have argued, there are some indications that Aristotle holds that participating in government, the judicial system, and the military is not absolutely necessary to this life of practical virtue and the happiness that it constitutes.⁹ But even when humans are living the life of moral virtue outside of the judiciary, the military, and government, they are *always* doing so — on Aristotle’s definition of moral virtue — with the aim of serving the well-being of the political society at large. Moreover, when Aristotle states that ‘the activity of the practical virtues is exhibited in political or military affairs’ (*NE* 1177b6–7), he is surely granting some kind of priority to those affairs. The way in which (in both the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics*) he contrasts the contemplative life not with the life of moral virtue but with the life of the citizen and statesman (*politikos*) moreover, suggests that the primary arena for the exercise of moral virtue is government, the judiciary, and the armed forces.

As we have seen, however, the rational principle is bipartite: besides the calculative or practical reason which enters into good deliberation and choice of those actions which are in accordance with the moral virtues, there is scientific reason. Richard Kraut and Fred Miller observe that Aristotle uses the term ‘to contemplate’ (*theōrein*) in different senses, but one major sense in which he uses it is to refer to that activity of the scientific reason that has the virtues proper to it.¹⁰ The

⁹ See Richard Mulgan, ‘Aristotle and the Value of Political Participation’, *Political Theory*, 18 (1990), 195–215; P. A. Vander Waerdt, ‘Kingship and Philosophy in Aristotle’s Best Regime’, *Phronesis*, 30 (1985), 249–73; Tim Duvall and Paul Dotson, ‘Political Participation and *Eudaimonia* in Aristotle’s *Politics*’, *History of Political Thought*, 19 (1998), 21–34.

¹⁰ Fred D. Miller, Jr, *Nature, Justice and Rights in Aristotle’s ‘Politics’* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 6; Richard Kraut, *Aristotle on the Human Good* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), pp. 15–16, 65.

particular virtues proper to scientific reason (those states of scientific reason which permit it to function well) are philosophical wisdom (*sophia*), intuitive knowledge, and scientific knowledge. These we acquire through learning (*NE* 1103a14–15). The objects of scientific reason, those things about which one contemplates, are necessary, eternal, invariable things, such as the gods, mathematics, and the heavenly bodies. For Aristotle, not only is scientific reason, as a *faculty* or *element*, better than and superior to calculative reason, but its *virtues* are superior to those of calculative reason (*NE* 1143b33–34) and its *objects* are superior to and better than those of calculative reason. It would seem to follow that the *activity* of scientific reason (contemplation (*theōria*)) is superior to that of calculative reason (which includes deliberation) and that contemplation would be closer to the life of happiness than political activity. And in the final book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle does indeed claim that contemplative activity is in accordance with the ‘best thing in us’ (though he calls this best thing not ‘scientific reason’ but only ‘reason’), is the activity which we can perform most continuously, is ‘the pleasantest of virtuous activities’, is self-sufficient, is ‘leisurely’, is something we perform without becoming weary, is loved for its own sake, and is what the gods do. On the basis of these observations, he argues that contemplation is ‘superior to that which is the exercise of the other kind of virtue’ (moral virtue) and is, indeed, ‘perfect happiness’ (*NE* 1143b33–34).

However, nowhere in the *Politics* does Aristotle so explicitly and comprehensively subordinate the life of the citizen and statesman (lived in accordance with the moral virtues) to the life of the philosopher (lived in accordance with the moral virtues and the virtues of scientific reason) as he does in the celebrated passage in Book X of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Indeed, the discussion of the relation between the two lives at the opening of Book VII of the *Politics* is inconclusive. Moreover, in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle still claims that ‘man is born for citizenship’ (1097b12) and that ‘man is a political creature and one whose nature is to live with others’ (1169b18–19). In Books VIII and IX, he emphasizes that these others must include friends, for ‘the supremely happy man will need [virtuous] friends’ (*NE* 1170a1–3). And even in Book X, there is some question as to the appropriateness and feasibility of the life of contemplation for humans: while it may be proper for the gods, the life of contemplation is ‘too high for man’ and ‘our nature is not self-sufficient for the purpose of contemplation’ (*NE* 1177b26, 1178b33–35).

As he presents what he refers to as his ‘philosophy of human nature’ (*NE* 1181b15) over the course of the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics*, Aristotle is thus ambivalent, if not simply inconsistent, on precisely how the contemplative life and the political life are related to each other, human nature, and happiness, and

this is one reason why there has been such extensive controversy over his treatment of this issue. But it is at least clear that, while sometimes wanting to grant some kind of priority to the contemplative life, Aristotle sees both the political life and the contemplative life as forms of human action that are in accordance with the best part of man's composite nature — reason. As such, both qualify as fulfilments of the function man has by nature and as forms of *eudaimonia*, though the man who leads the political life will perhaps be happy only 'in a secondary degree' (*NE* 1178a8).

* * *

In his major writings on rhetoric, politics, philosophy, and ethics, Cicero, too, presents an account of human nature which serves as a foundation for many of his propositions about human fulfilment and politics. In *On Laws* (which he wrote in the late 50s) for example, Cicero claims that 'we must clarify the *nature* of justice, and that has to be deduced from the nature of man' (I. 17). He proceeds to observe that only man shares the capacity to reason with the gods, and only he is therefore a member of that 'single community shared by gods and men' which is subject to the law of nature (*Laws* I. 23–24, I. 30; see also *Duties* I. 14, 50, 105–07; *Ends* II. 45).¹¹ Because Cicero understands all humans to be endowed with reason which allows them to recognize and obey this natural law which is the criterion of justice for both gods and men, he feels that we all have a particular purpose in life: 'of all the issues dealt with in philosophical debates', Cicero explains to his wealthy friend Atticus and his brother Quintus, 'surely nothing is more vital than the clear realization that we are born for justice' (*Laws* I. 28). By this he means that 'we have been made by nature to share justice amongst ourselves and to impart it to one another', and that 'we are born to join a fellowship of citizens' (*Laws* I. 33, I. 62). Perhaps displaying his allegiances to the Stoics, Cicero in this work sometimes claims that 'God', 'Jupiter', or 'the gods' are the agent that made man for justice (*Laws* I. 21–25). But he also here commonly claims that it is nature that makes man for justice, and that natural law itself is not so much the declaration of a divine will as right reason itself commanding both men and gods. In *On Moral Ends*, one of the philosophical works from the mid-40s, Cicero affirms this more naturalistic understanding of the ends of man when, arguing against those who claim that pleasure is the highest good, he claims, 'these thinkers failed to realize that just as

¹¹ For a more detailed description of this psychology and its precedents in Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics, see Jean-Louis Ferrary, 'The Statesman and the Law in the Political Philosophy of Cicero', in *Justice and Generosity*, ed. by André Laks and Malcolm Schofield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 48–73 (pp. 60–66).

horses are born to run, oxen to plough and hounds to hunt, so humans are born to do two things, as Aristotle says: think and act, like a kind of mortal god' (II. 40). When he proceeds to specify the kind of action for which man is made, he refers only to nature:

[humans] are endowed by nature with reason and with a sharp and vigorous intellect that is capable of performing a large number of operations simultaneously at high speed [...]. The same power of reason makes people want each other's company and has produced a natural congruence of language and behaviour. Beginning with the bonds of affection between family and friends, we are prompted to move gradually further out and associate ourselves firstly with our fellow citizens and then with every person on earth. As Plato wrote to Archytas, we bear in mind that we are born not just for ourselves but for our country and our people, so much so that only a small fraction of us remains for ourselves. (Ends II. 45)

Similarly, in *On Duties* (which he wrote in 43, just prior to being assassinated), there is very little reference to supernatural agents at all, with the result that the work comes across as an assertion of what Long calls 'a secularized Stoicism'.¹²

Cary Nederman observes that in the early *On Invention* and the later *On the Orator* (which he wrote in 55), Cicero speaks of the capacity to form and join in a fellowship of citizens as something that is rather passive which requires 'an external stimulus [such as a great orator] to awaken and invigorate it'.¹³ But it is important to note that in *Brutus*, his late work on the history of Roman oratory, Cicero claims that 'the ambition to speak well does not arise when men are engaged in establishing government, nor occupied with the conduct of war, nor shackled and chained by the authority of kings. Upon peace and tranquility eloquence attends as their ally, it is, one may say, the offspring of well-established civic order'.¹⁴ And the prevailing view in the major philosophical works is that human nature has an innate, active desire and impulse to form societies and, indeed, to serve justice within them. At the opening of what remains of *On the Republic* (which he wrote immediately after *On the Orator* and just prior to *On Laws*), for example, Cicero claims that 'nature has given to mankind such a compulsion to do good, and such

¹² A. A. Long, 'Cicero's Politics in *De officiis*', in *Justice and Generosity*, ed. by Laks and Schofield, pp. 213–40 (p. 239). See also Long, 'Stoic Communitarianism and Normative Citizenship', in *Freedom, Reason, and the Polis*, ed. by Keyt and Miller, pp. 241–61 (pp. 252–55).

¹³ Cary Nederman, 'Nature, Sin, and the Origins of Society: The Ciceronian Tradition in Medieval Political Thought', in his *Medieval Aristotelianism and its Limits*, pp. 3–26 (p. 9).

¹⁴ Cicero, *Brutus*, trans. by G. L. Hendrickson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1939; repr. 2001), 11.45.

a desire to defend the well-being of the community, that this force prevails over all the temptations of pleasure and ease' (I. 1). 'We are led by a powerful urge,' he writes as he continues to recommend the political life, 'to increase the wealth of the human race; we are keen to make men's lives safer and richer by our policies and efforts; we are spurred on by nature herself to fulfill this purpose' (*Rep* I. 3). Later in the dialogue, Scipio (who is often taken to be Cicero's spokesman in the dialogue) observes that 'the primary reason' humans form political societies is that there is 'a sort of innate desire on the part of human beings to form communities' (*Rep* I. 39). In *On Laws*, he claims that 'we are inclined by nature to have a regard for others; and that is the basis of justice' (I. 43). Moreover, the best citizens, those who 'strive for praise and honour, shunning disgrace and dishonour', are driven not so much by fear of the punishments set by civil law as by a 'sense of shame — that dread, as it were, of justified rebuke which nature has imparted to man' (*Rep* V. 6; see also *Duties* I. 126–27; *Ends* II. 113). Cicero thus sometimes postulates the purpose or end of human nature on the basis of his observation of both a special capacity to reason which is shared by humans and gods, and a powerful inborn desire and urge in man to exercise that capacity through the formation of communities and the administration of justice within them.

Cicero also emphasizes in many works that the act of speaking grounded in the speaker's own virtue, knowledge, and wisdom — what he calls 'eloquence' and 'oratory' — is at the heart of the life that is devoted to justice in free political societies. This is only to be expected since, as Nederman observes, 'regardless of where we look in the Ciceronian corpus, we encounter basically the same claim about human nature: the linguistic and rational capacities unique to mankind are inextricably interlinked and mutually reinforcing'.¹⁵ Thus, in *On the Orator*, the two most authoritative speakers in the dialogue he describes (the great Roman orators, Crassus and Antonius) present grand accounts of how eloquence serves justice (I. 32–34, I. 202, II. 35, III. 76). Crassus sums up by observing that 'the wise control of the complete orator is that which chiefly upholds not only his own

¹⁵ Cary Nederman, 'The Union of Wisdom and Eloquence Before the Renaissance: The Ciceronian Orator in Medieval Thought', in his *Medieval Aristotelianism and its Limits*, pp. 75–95 (p. 80). See also Neal Wood, *Cicero's Social and Political Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 70–89. Malcolm Schofield observes that Cicero on natural justice follows the Stoics, but adds that in works such as *On Human Ends* and *On Duties*, he complements his account of the natural inclination to be just as one that is grounded in reason with an account of this inclination as one that moves out of the natural impulse of parents to love their offspring, an impulse that mankind shares with the animals. See 'Two Stoic Approaches to Justice', in *Justice and Generosity*, ed. by Laks and Schofield, pp. 191–212.

dignity, but the safety of countless individuals and of the entire State' (*Or* I. 34); Antonius describes the practice of eloquence as 'that governing force in every tranquil and free community' (*Or* II. 33). Cicero himself emphatically makes the point in both *On Laws* (I. 62) and *On Duties* (I. 50, I. 107, III. 23).

Given that mankind is born for justice, where this means in part being born with both capacities and powerful urges to exercise reason and linguistic power with the aim of serving justice within a community, it follows that mankind can fulfill itself and live the good life only by being a member of and participating in some kind of community. Since 'all are held together by a natural goodwill and kindness and also by a fellowship in justice' (*Laws* I. 35), since every human, simply by virtue of being endowed with reason and speech and so being subject to natural law, is really a 'citizen of the whole world as though it were a single city' (*Laws* I. 61), it might seem that humans do not really need to be members of any more limited, man-made political societies in order to fulfill themselves. But Cicero claims that participation in the cosmopolis of all rational agents subject to the law of nature is insufficient to satisfy man's innate socio-political instinct. For, as he says in *On the Republic*, human beings have an 'innate desire' to form communities bound by legal consent and community of interest (I. 39). In order to fulfill themselves and do what they were born to do, men must therefore participate in smaller communities bound by laws of their own making, but where these laws still conform with the law of nature which is the natural criterion of all justice: 'consider now', Scipio asserts, 'how wisely provision has been made for that partnership of citizens in a happy and honourable life. For that is the primary purpose of forming a community, and that must be achieved for human beings by the state, partly through its institutions and partly through its laws' (*Rep* IV. 3). As Scipio puts it later in the dialogue, 'the good life is impossible without a good state; and there is no greater blessing than a well-ordered state' (*Rep* V. 7).

Cicero emphasizes on many occasions that, as the achievement of the end which is a function of the standing of his own nature in the universe and the law to which that universe is subject, speaking eloquently with the aim of serving justice and enhancing the good of the society at large is not something that is properly pursued for the sake of something else, but is valuable in itself. In *On Laws*, for example, he insists that 'one should strive after justice and every moral virtue for their own sake' (I. 48). In *On Duties*, he explains to his son Marcus that 'there can be neither goodness nor liberality nor courteousness, no more than friendship, if these are not sought for their own sakes, but are directed towards pleasure or benefit' (III. 118; see also *Ends* II. 99). True, something of the shine of the political life is taken off by the *contemptus mundi* theme which occasionally surfaces in Cicero's writings.

In *On the Republic*, for example, Scipio asks 'what power, what office, what kingdom can be more desirable than the ability to look down on all things human, ranking them lower than wisdom, and never turn over in one's mind anything except what is divine and eternal' (I. 28), and he comes back to this thought when he relates his famous dream at the end of it. And in such passages, contemplation seems to challenge the political life as the final end of man. But though from one perspective the body is a prison and one might well feel 'ashamed' of the Roman Empire 'whose extent was no more than a dot' on the surface of the planet (as Scipio in fact does in his dream), the political life nevertheless generally takes precedence over the contemplative life in this work and Cicero's other writings.

In *On Duties*, however, the standing of the virtuous life of public service as the final end of man, the only thing which is to be pursued for its own sake, is more deeply compromised when Cicero discusses glory. In *On Invention*, Cicero defines glory as 'widespread reputation accompanied by praise',¹⁶ and in the *Philippics* he defines it as 'praise won by honourable deeds, and great services towards the State, a thing that is approved alike by the testimony of every honest man, and also by that of the multitude' (I. 12.29–30). Having touched on this subject in Book I of *On Duties* in his discussion of deeds done with great spirit which concludes with the counsel, 'beware also the desire for glory' (I. 68), Cicero returns to it in Book II when he observes that 'justice must be cultivated and maintained by every method, both for its own sake (for otherwise it would not be justice) and for the sake of enhancing one's honour and glory' (II. 42). 'If anyone wishes', he concludes, 'to win true glory, let him fulfill the duties of justice' (*Duties* II. 43). That one may legitimately pursue justice for the sake of glory is again suggested when Cicero claims that 'justice is the foundation of lasting commendation and repute. Without it nothing can be worthy of praise' (*Duties* II. 71; see also II. 85). In the *Philippics*, moreover, Cicero observes that the assassination of Caesar is a deed 'set before us for our imitation, all the more because they [the assassins] achieved such a glory as seems scarce to be bounded by heaven itself. For although in the very consciousness of a splendid deed there was sufficient reward, yet by a mortal immortality should not, I think, be despised' (II. 44.114). Long argues that, insisting that true glory cannot be won by anyone unless their deeds are just, Cicero in these late works was expressing his recognition that 'glory, instead of being earned by actions benefiting the state, was the fair-sounding pretext for the self-aggrandizement of those [such

¹⁶ Cicero, *On Invention*, trans. by H. M. Hubbell (London: Heinemann, 1949; repr. 1960), II. 55.166.

as Caesar and Antony] who were destroying the republic'.¹⁷ But it is also important to see that, attempting to reform the aristocratic Roman ideology of glory in this way, Cicero at times suggests that the public life has an instrumental value, that it is valuable as the means to the praise of good men that the Romans and Cicero himself prized. Glory, that is, sometimes looks as though it is neither something to be scorned, nor simply a pleasant benefit of living the life that fulfills what by nature man is, but something that is of value in and of itself, something that one properly attempts to attain by way of living as Cicero himself did.

There are, then, some important differences between Cicero and Aristotle on human nature, its fulfilment, and the consequences of that fulfilment. Cicero does not share the vision of man, occasionally affirmed by Aristotle, as an animal that achieves perfect happiness only in contemplation. Because Cicero is strongly inclined to rank the political life higher than the contemplative life, he places more importance upon eloquence than Aristotle does. While Aristotle might still reasonably be seen to imply the importance of forensic, deliberative, and epideictic oratory in his affirmation of the life of the statesman, there would appear to be little place for such speech acts in the contemplative life. And it is in part because Aristotle feels that 'arguments' are ineffectual in making the many virtuous and that the many are not to be *persuaded* to be good (*NE* 1179b–1180a), that he does not place eloquence at the heart of the political life as Cicero does. Cicero sometimes speaks of the end or purpose of man in terms of the intentions and purposes 'God', 'Jupiter', and 'the gods' had when they created man, whereas Aristotle, at least in his major ethical and political writings, does not usually describe the end of man in this way. Neither do we find in Aristotle the suggestion that glory is that for the sake of which one lives the good life, though public honour is still an important element of the virtuous life in the *polis*. Finally, Cicero's notion of a natural law to which all rational agents are subject and in accordance with which they are to live finds no *explicit* counterpart in Aristotle's political writings, though some have argued that he is nevertheless a natural law theorist.¹⁸

These important differences should not, however, prevent us from seeing how the Roman agrees with the Greek to whom he often both explicitly and implicitly refers, though it seems that Cicero had only secondhand knowledge of Aristotle's

¹⁷ Long, 'Cicero's Politics in *De officiis*', p. 215.

¹⁸ See W. von Leyden, *Aristotle on Equality and Justice: His Political Argument* (Houndsmills: MacMillan, 1985); Miller, *Nature, Justice, and Rights in Aristotle's 'Politics'*.

works.¹⁹ Both assert that the human animal has a composite nature (of body and soul), though Cicero's dualistic interpretation of it differs from Aristotle's. Both see reason as a crucial element of the soul, an element which sets it apart from the animals and which it shares with the gods. Both assert that humans have special faculties of reason and speech and inborn desires and urges to exercise them within socio-political communities. Both define the end or purpose of human existence in terms of the exercise and development of these inborn desires and urges, and both understand human flourishing in terms of the achievement of this end. As we will see in more detail later, both think of human virtue in terms of the rule of reason over passion and appetite, and those qualities which enable one to achieve one's end (though Cicero sometimes displays some sympathy for Stoic conceptions of virtue in terms of the extinction of passion and obedience to natural law). Both think of statesmanship as *a*, if not *the*, principal way humans may exercise their reason, live the life of virtue, and fulfill the ends they have by nature. Rahe is thus correct when he argues that 'in contrasting classical Roman thought with Aristotelianism, Skinner would appear to be making a distinction where there is for the purpose of his analysis little, if any difference'.²⁰

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Though Sallust does not present anything like a theory of human nature in his historical writings, he proceeds on the basis of an understanding of it that has much

¹⁹ For discussions of Cicero's knowledge of Aristotle and its importance to his own views, see Marcia Colish, *The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages* (Leiden: Brill, 1985; repr. 1990), pp. 72–152; *Cicero's Knowledge of the Peripatos*, ed. by William W. Fortenbaugh and Peter Steinmetz (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1989); Ferrary, 'Statesman and the Law in the Political Philosophy of Cicero'; A. A. Long, 'Cicero's Plato and Aristotle', in *Cicero the Philosopher*, ed. by J. G. F. Powell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 37–61; Jonathan Barnes, 'Roman Aristotle', in *Philosophia Togata II: Plato and Aristotle at Rome*, ed. by Jonathan Barnes and Miriam Griffin (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 1–69.

²⁰ Rahe, 'Situating Machiavelli', p. 284. See also Brunt who generally emphasizes the continuity of Greek and Roman thinking about liberty, in 'Libertas in the Republic', in *The Fall of the Roman Republic and Related Essays* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 281–350. Nicholas Buttle overlooks these important points of agreement between Aristotle and Cicero in 'Republican Constitutionalism: A Roman Ideal', *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 9 (2001), 331–49. While rightly contrasting Cicero and Aristotle on the issue of glory, Eric Nelson also underestimates the points of agreement between the two in *Greek Tradition in Republican Thought*. Skinner strongly differentiates Aristotelian tradition from republican and neo-Roman tradition in 'Republican Ideal of Political Liberty', but is less categorical in 'The Rediscovery of Republican Values' and 'Classical Liberty, Renaissance Translation and the English Civil War', both of which appear in *Renaissance Virtues*, pp. 10–38 and 308–43.

in common with the Aristotelian/Ciceronian vision of man but which also introduces some crucial revisions to it as well. Like Aristotle and Cicero, Sallust, first of all, thinks of human nature as a bipartite entity, one that consists of body and mind. Sallust's dualistic interpretation of the body/mind difference is essentially the same as that presented by Cicero in passages such as the dream of Scipio. In the preface to *The War with Jugurtha*, for example, he observes that 'as mankind is made up of body [*corpore*] and soul [*animus*], all our acts and pursuits partake of the nature either of the body or of the mind [*animus*]' (2.1). In the preface to *The War with Catiline*, he observes that 'all our power [...] lies in both mind and body; we employ the mind to rule, the body rather to serve; the one we have in common with the gods, the other with the brutes' (1.2–3). These passages also show that, like both Aristotle and Cicero, Sallust sees the mind as being superior to or better than the body. As he puts it in *The War with Jugurtha*, 'the mind [...] is better and greater than anything else in man's nature' (2.4).²¹ On the basis of this understanding of the bipartite nature of the human animal, Sallust also follows Aristotle and Cicero in asserting that a particular way of living and behaving is natural and proper to it: in *The War with Catiline*, after making his observation about how man is related to the gods and the animals, he writes, 'therefore I find it becoming, in seeking renown, that we should employ the resources of the intellect rather than those of brute strength' (1.3–4). He adds that

many men, being slaves to appetite and sleep, have passed through life untaught and untrained, like mere wayfarers; in these men we see, contrary to Nature's intent [*contra naturam*] the body a source of pleasure, the soul a burden. For my own part, I consider the lives and deaths of such men as about alike, since no record is made of either. In very truth that man alone lives and makes the most of life, as it seems to me, who devotes himself to some occupation, courting the fame of a glorious deed or a noble career. But amid the wealth of opportunities Nature points out one path to one and another to another. (*Cat* 2.8–11)

And in *The War with Jugurtha*, he claims that 'we can but marvel the more at the perversity of those who pass their life in riotous living and idleness, given over to the pleasures of the body', while they allow their minds 'to grow dull from neglect and inaction' (2.4).

Human nature is also, however, mortal (through no fault of its own), and it is that fact that seems to lead Sallust to posit a final goal or purpose for the kind of life he sees as being proper for the human animal. After observing at the opening

²¹ For a detailed discussion of Sallust's dualistic interpretation of human nature, see Étienne Tiffou, *Essai sur La Pensée Morale de Salluste à la Lumière de ses Prologues* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1974).

of *The War with Catiline* that mankind has mind in common with the gods and body in common with the other animals, he writes that men should employ the former 'to the end that, since the span of life which we enjoy is short, we may make the memory of our lives as long as possible. For the renown which riches or beauty confer is fleeting and frail; mental excellence is a splendid and lasting possession' (*Cat* 1.1–4). His contempt for those men of whose pleasure-filled lives there is no record is a further expression of this understanding of noble memory as the final goal of human life. As D. C. Earl puts it, 'Sallust begins with the assumption that man's natural aim in life is *gloriam quaerere*, not in *vita*, which is *brevis*, but in *memoria*'.²² In light of the mortality of human nature, then, Sallust (like Cicero on occasion) recommends 'fame', 'renown', 'memory', and 'glory' as the goal that is proper to it. In light of the facts that the exertion of intellect is in accordance with what man is by nature, and that the best, most lasting renown is achieved through that kind of exertion, he recommends the exertion of intellect as the best means to achieve that goal.

Though in some passages *gloria* seems to be that for the sake of which Sallust thinks humans ought to live their lives, he also gives some indications that *gloria* has an instrumental value, that it is valuable as a means to serving and achieving a greater good: a strong and virtuous political society. Thus, in the preface to *The War with Jugurtha*, he observes that several eminent Romans claimed that 'it is the memory of great deeds that kindles in the breasts of noble men this flame that cannot be quelled until they by their own prowess have equaled the fame and glory of their forefathers' (4.6). The memory of great deeds inspires others to perform great deeds, and Sallust all along makes clear that at least one of the principal things that qualifies Roman deeds as great deeds is that they served the good of Rome. Likewise, the heroic figures of the monologues — Cicero, Cato, and Caesar in *The War with Catiline*; Memmius, Metellus, and Marius in *The War with Jugurtha* — are all presented as men who, striving in various degrees for their own glory, are also genuinely concerned to serve the greater good of Rome. This affirmation of *gloria* for the way in which it serves a higher good is, moreover, evident in Sallust's presentation of himself as a historian: as someone who commemorates and praises the great deeds of his countrymen, Sallust is like the ancient Athenian historians, Thucydides and Herodotus, who were instrumental in producing the glory of Athenian soldiers and statesmen (*Cat* 8.1–5). Sallust claims value for this intellectual activity not so much because it will serve to promote the historian's own glory (which it

²² D. C. Earl, *The Political Thought of Sallust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), p. 8; see also p. 16.

will), but because it serves the historian's country: his act of writing history while he is 'aloof from public affairs' is 'especially serviceable', by which he means that 'greater profit will accrue to our country from my inactivity [in public affairs] than from others' activity' (*Jug* 4.1–4). So, while sometimes writing as though it is the chief end of an individual's life, Sallust also sees the pursuit of *gloria* as something that is valuable as a means of achieving something else of great importance and value: a strong and virtuous political society. His affirmation of *gloria* is thus in an important way consistent with the way in which throughout his writings he warmly endorses those who subordinate their own interests to those of their political societies, and fiercely denounces those, such as Catiline's co-conspirators and the senators whom Jugurtha bribes, for placing their personal interests above those of Rome.

These remarks also suggest that Sallust sees man as enjoying, or at least having the potential to enjoy, a particular kind of freedom, the freedom from fate, circumstance, and fortune to live as he wishes. This is confirmed in *The War with Jugurtha* which opens with the complaint that 'without reason do mankind complain of their nature, on the ground that it is weak and of short duration, and ruled rather by chance than by virtue'. On the contrary, Sallust boldly asserts, 'the leader and ruler of man's life is the mind' (*Jug* 1.1–3), and 'the mind, incorruptible, eternal, ruler of mankind, animates and controls all things, yet is itself not controlled' (*Jug* 2.3). Sallust qualifies these claims for man's natural independence and freedom from external forces and for its power to control circumstances and human life, however, by way of several conditionals: it is only when the mind 'advances to glory by the path of virtue, [that] it has power and potency in abundance, as well as fame; and it needs not fortune, since fortune can neither give to any man honesty, diligence, and other good qualities, nor can she take them away' (*Jug* 1.3–4); 'if men had as great regard for honourable enterprises as they have ardour in pursuing what is foreign to their interests, and bound to be unprofitable and often even dangerous, they would control fate rather than be controlled by it' (*Jug* 1.5). If, on the other hand, 'through the lure of base desires the mind has sunk into sloth and the pleasures of the body, when it has enjoyed ruinous indulgence for a season, when strength, time, and talents have been wasted through indolence, the weakness of human nature is accused, and the guilty shift their own blame to circumstances' (*Jug* 1.4).

Sallust thus understands human nature to enjoy a freedom from forces external to it such as fortune, circumstance, and chance, but only so long as its two parts stand in a particular relation to each other. Though, as we will see, Sallust sees all kinds of things entering into the determination of this mind/body relationship upon which their freedom from fortune and circumstance depends, he also gives

some indications that he thinks that individuals are by nature free to determine it: humans (or human minds) can choose to work and exert their inborn talents in such a way as to come into command of passion and appetite, or they can give themselves over to an existence of pleasure and sloth with the result that they become enslaved by their passions and appetites. This is confirmed by Sallust's discussion in *The War with Catiline* of those 'two men of towering merit', Caesar and Cato, both of whom are seen as individuals who, in spite of existing within the late corrupt republic, simply decided on their own to live in such a way that their minds came into firm control of their passions and appetites (53–54). It is in part because Sallust understands human nature to be at least to some extent free to live in a way which results in the establishment of the proper, natural relationship between body and mind or in a way which results in the establishment of a perverse, unnatural relationship between body and mind that he chastises those who blame human nature and circumstances for their loss of control over and failings in life. The fault lies not with human nature or its circumstances, but with individuals' free choices of ways of life that result in the body controlling the mind, which in turn results in the subjection of human life to circumstance and fortune.

Sallust also indicates in these and other passages that, like Aristotle and Cicero, he aligns the human within whom the soul controls appetite and passion with both the human who exists in accordance with nature and the human who is virtuous. But the status of holding judicial, military, and political office is qualified by him in light of his perception that the late republic is corrupt: 'magistracies and military commands, in short all public offices, are least desirable in these times, since honour is not bestowed upon merit, while those who have gained it wrongfully are neither safe nor the more honourable because of it' (*Jug* 3.1–2). Indeed, 'to struggle in vain and after wearisome exertion to gain nothing but hatred' — which is what Sallust thinks happens to men of merit who hold office in Rome — 'is the height of folly' (*Jug* 3.3). The value of holding office is, in addition, contingent upon the merit of those who hold it: the way in which men seek office 'by intrigue and open fraud' makes it seem 'as if a praetorship, a consulship, or anything else of the kind were distinguished and illustrious in and of itself and were not valued according to the merit of those who live up to it' (*Jug* 4.7–9).

Since what is essential to the life in accordance with human nature and virtue is the exertion of mind, it turns out that a wide range of occupations may qualify as the life of virtue. Besides arguing for the integrity of writing history, Sallust claims that the application of 'mental excellence' (*Cat* 1.4, 2.3, 2.8) may manifest itself not only as success in political and military life, but also as 'success in agriculture, seafaring, and architecture' (*Cat* 2.7) (since Sallust holds that 'farming' and hunting

are slavish occupations (*Cat* 4.1–2), he here must understand agriculture as Cicero does — in terms of planning and managing lands, rather than actually doing the manual labor). As we have seen, there is in fact, a ‘wealth of opportunities’; ‘Nature points out one path to one and another to another’ (*Cat* 2.9); ‘there are so many and so varied intellectual pursuits by which the highest distinction may be won’ (*Jug* 2.4). Thus Sallust certainly continues to think of government and the military as major arenas within which virtue is exercised, and as long as the political society is healthy and functioning properly, he seems to think of them as the most important arenas for the exercise of virtue. But because he regards a very wide range of human activities as ones requiring the exertion of mental excellence, he also regards a wide range of activities as ways of living in accordance with nature, exercising virtue, and achieving the ends of man — *gloria* and a thriving political society.

* * *

Many aspects of the ancients’ understanding of man may be found in Machiavelli’s writings. First of all, Machiavelli reaffirms their view of human nature as something that stays the same over time. Though in the preface to the *Discourses* Machiavelli confesses to be ‘filled with astonishment and grief’ by the fact that ‘the highly virtuous actions’ performed by the ancients are now shunned and that ‘of the virtue of bygone days there remains no trace’, he scornfully dismisses the modern way of acting ‘as if the heaven, the sun, the elements and man had in their motion, their order, and their potency become different from what they used to be’ (*D* 98–99). Recalling his remarks in the preface at the close of the opening chapter on Roman religion, he claims that ‘men are born and live and die in an order which remains ever the same’ (*D* 142). Later, he writes, ‘if the present be compared with the remote past, it is easily seen that in all cities and in all peoples there are the same desires and the same passions as there always were’ (*D* 207). And near the end of the work, he agrees with those prudent men who claim that ‘men have, and always have had, the same passions, whence it necessarily comes about that the same effects are produced’ (*D* 517; also 266). As we will see, this vision of the essential sameness of man over time is one of the crucial premises of Machiavelli’s argument for the value and utility of studying history to those who wish to succeed in the military and political arenas of this world.

These passages suggest that Machiavelli is inclined to share the ancients’ view of this unchanging human agent as an animal that, moved and driven by powerful and unruly desires and passions, yet possesses some kind of mental or intellectual faculty which may resist and guide them and which is the ground of freedom of action. The force of natural desire (*desiderio*), passion (*passione*), and appetite (*appetito*) is clear. ‘Nature has so constituted men’ he writes, ‘that, though all things

are objects of desire, not all things are attainable; so that desire always exceeds the power of attainment, with the result that men are ill content with what they possess and their present state brings them little satisfaction' (*D* 200). 'Men are like birds of prey', Machiavelli observes, 'in whom so strong is the desire to catch the prey which nature incites them to pursue, that they do not notice another and a greater bird of prey which hovers over them ready to pounce and kill' (*D* 216). 'Human appetites are insatiable, for by nature we are so constituted that there is nothing we cannot long for, but by fortune we are such that of these things we can attain but few' (*D* 268). Throughout *The Prince* and the *Discourses*, he describes both men and women as being driven and motivated by those passions, appetites, and desires which exist in all people at all times in all places. Primary among these are the passions love, fear, hatred, pride/insolence, and envy (*D* 97, 128, 344, 427, 463, 485, 487; *Pr* throughout); the desires to dominate (ambition) and to acquire (greed and avarice); and the desire to avenge (*D* 116, 200, 215, 224, 233, 341, 395, 404, 425, 427, 441, 524–25).²³

Though, on occasion, Machiavelli explicitly equates these passions, appetites, and desires with 'the force of nature' which cannot be resisted (*Pr* 81; *D* 430–31, 464), it would be mistaken to claim, as Parel and Mansfield do,²⁴ that contrary to the ancients, Machiavelli claims that the human animal is incapable of the performance of voluntary action, where voluntary action would be action that is brought about not by the force of humors and passions but by the will and some mental faculty or detached intelligence that deliberates and chooses. For in the *Discourses*,

²³ In *The Machiavellian Cosmos* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), Anthony Parel cites Machiavelli's occasional use of the word 'humour' (*umore*) to argue that Machiavelli's conception of human nature is grounded in the Galenic/Hippocratic theory of the humours. But compared to his use of 'desire', 'passion', and 'appetite' in *The Prince* and the *Discourses*, Machiavelli's use of 'humor' in these works is infrequent. When he does use it, it is often in a general non-technical sense, or in a metaphorical sense, as when he uses it to refer to the classes or factions of cities. Moreover, at least in *The Prince* and the *Discourses*, Machiavelli never uses any of the technical terms for the four humors — 'blood', 'phlegm', 'yellow bile', and 'black bile' — to describe human nature, and very rarely if ever uses the technical terms — 'sanguine', 'phlegmatic', 'choleric', and 'melancholic' — to refer to the four temperaments that correspond to the four humors. Thus, while there are traces of the Galenic/Hippocratic vocabulary in Machiavelli's political writings, they are faint and negligible compared to the psychological and anthropological vocabulary which he found in the ancient Greek and Roman philosophers and historians. For Machiavelli's vocabulary in the *Discourses*, see the glossary in Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, trans. by Harvey C. Mansfield and Nathan Tarcov (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

²⁴ See Harvey Mansfield, *Machiavelli's Virtue* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 16, 24, 39, 277; Parel, *Machiavellian Cosmos*, p. 89.

he refers to men who, 'less virtuous' than Themistocles, 'let themselves be swayed by their desires and their passions' (D 377), as though men have some kind of faculty or ability by virtue of which they may avoid being swayed by them. This implication is borne out in *The Prince* where Machiavelli explicitly asserts that men have free will (79, 83) and holds responsible and chastises those princes who do not exercise this freedom to behave in ways that would guarantee the maintenance of their rule. He also here refers to the *virtù d'animo e di corpo*, an expression which Bull translates as 'audacity and physical courage' (Pr 27) but which Price translates as 'energy of mind and body',²⁵ and which Walker and Richardson translate as 'virtues of mind and body' when it occurs in the *Discourses* (427). It is borne out later in *The Prince* when, sounding very much like Sallust in the preface to *The War with Catiline* (a work which 'everyone has read' (D 420)), Machiavelli counsels the prince to engage in 'physical and mental' exercises (*l'uno con le opere, l'altro con la mente*) and in 'intellectual training' (*esercizio della mente*), such as reading history (Pr 47–49). It is borne out on a number of occasions elsewhere in the *Discourses* when Machiavelli observes that passion and desire sometimes but do not necessarily lead to a kind of 'blindness', by which he clearly means an incapacitation of mind or intellect which, when not so incapacitated, may be used to *understand* things as they are and formulate courses of action which would allow one to achieve one's goals (D 216–17, 404, 410, 427, 429, 524–25). Besides occasionally referring to this mental, intellectual part or faculty of man as *mente*, Machiavelli also in the *Discourses* sometimes uses the term *animo* to refer to it, though he commonly uses this term in the sense of intent, disposition, or spirit.²⁶ Finally, it is difficult to see how Machiavelli's frequent references in both *The Prince* and the *Discourses* to 'prudence' (*prudenza*) and men who act out of it could make sense unless he was working on some kind of postulate of mind or intellect that was distinct from and in some sense independent of desire and appetite.

In both *The Prince* and the *Discourses*, then, Machiavelli often writes in a way that implies that though men are powerfully inclined to behave in certain ways by the passions and desires that to a great extent define their particular natures, they may nevertheless exercise their 'mind' or 'intellect' or 'mental' faculties in such a

²⁵ See Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. by Russell Price, ed. by Quentin Skinner and Russell Price (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988; repr. 2002).

²⁶ On Machiavelli's usage of *mente* and *animo* to refer to mind or intellect in the *Discourses*, see the glossary provided by Mansfield and Narcov in their translation. On *animo* and its importance, see Leo Strauss, *Thoughts on Machiavelli* (Glencoe: Free Press, 1958), p. 200; Parel, *Machiavellian Cosmos*, pp. 87–92.

way as to contain the force of these passions and to act or not to act in accordance with the practical lessons and rules Machiavelli and other historians present to them. Indeed, Machiavelli's own act of counselling men primarily on the basis of his study of history proceeds on the assumption that, regardless of their character or individual nature, men, on the basis of mental work (such as reading Machiavelli), choice, and exerting their own will, are capable of following some courses of action and avoiding others.

Machiavelli often associates the passions and desires which go to define the natures of men with vice and corruption and immoral, blameworthy, wicked, and dishonourable conduct. Thus, besides describing virtue in terms of resistance to passion and desire, he urges all legislators 'to be all the more ready to restrain human appetites and to deprive them of all hope of doing wrong with impunity' (*D* 217). Given that passions, desires, and appetites define human natures, and given that they are tantamount to vice and failure, it might appear that Machiavelli is, as Skinner puts it, 'deeply pessimistic about human nature' and that, as Rahe puts it, 'Machiavelli's understanding of republican politics would appear to have a certain Augustinian flavor: it presupposes as ineluctable the human depravity that the ancient Greeks and Romans thought it possible by way of *paideia* to transcend'.²⁷ And Machiavelli does indeed claim that 'in constituting and legislating for a commonwealth it needs to be taken for granted that all men are wicked and that they will always give vent to the malignity that is in their minds when opportunity offers' (*D* 112); 'men never do good unless necessity drives them to it' (*D* 112); and 'men are more prone to evil than to good' (*D* 132, 290). These observations are borne out in *The Prince* where Machiavelli on a number of occasions describes that 'wretched creature', man (26, 54, 56, 77).

It would, however, be mistaken to think that Machiavelli consistently rejects the ancient postulate of the moral neutrality of human nature and thinks of mankind as an agent which, dominated by passion and appetite right from the start, is innately wicked and corrupt. First of all, perhaps restating Sallust, Machiavelli in his discussion of acts of 'unwonted severity' that renovate institutions explicitly affirms the passions of fear and terror as a foundation of virtue in a populace (*D* 387–88) — even if such passions were innate, they would not necessarily qualify human nature as depraved. Secondly, on many occasions Machiavelli implies and claims that passion and desire are products of various aspects of the human condition and that they may thus change and take on different configurations in different people.

²⁷ Quentin Skinner, 'Republican Virtues in an Age of Princes', in *Renaissance Virtues*, p. 156; Rahe, 'Situating Machiavelli', p. 302.

Thus, the affair of the Decemviri shows how easily men are corrupted and 'in nature become transformed, however good they may be and however well taught' (*D* 217). Though 'nature' has made the French ardent at the beginning of a fight and weak at the end, 'it does not follow from this that the nature which makes them ardent at the start could not be so regulated by rules as to keep them ardent right up to the end' (*D* 503). And the envy which is supposedly inherent to man's nature is in fact surmountable and eradicable: in the final book, he observes how the Romans, 'putting envy aside', placed their confidence in Camillus, and he identifies two ways by which 'envy may be got rid of' (*D* 485) (though one way is by killing those held by it). And though there may be a nature common to all, yet different men may have different 'natures', as the difference between Manlius Torquatus and Valerius Corvinus makes clear (*D* 467–68).

More importantly, perhaps recalling an Aristotelian locution (*P* 1318b9, 1326a1–5), Machiavelli on several occasions in the *Discourses* refers to the populace of a particular political society as 'matter' and 'material' (*materia*) which, depending upon how it is treated and worked upon, is 'good' and 'virtuous' or 'bad' and 'corrupt'.²⁸ Thus, the difficulty a people accustomed to living under a prince has in maintaining a newly won freedom will occur 'no matter how free the material be from corruption' (*D* 154); when the 'material' of a political society is not corrupt, tumults do no harm. States may be on the decline 'owing to the corruption of its material' (*D* 159), and 'similar forms cannot subsist in matter which is disposed in a contrary manner' (*D* 163; see also *D* 246, 427, 428–29). This way of speaking about people is confirmed by the way Machiavelli continually distinguishes between the early days of the Roman republic 'when men were good' and the later days when 'men have become bad' (*D* 160–61), as well as the famous analogy he draws in his discussion of the times of Numa. Those times

were so impregnated with a religious spirit and the men with whom he had to deal so stupid that they contributed very much to facilitate his designs and made it easy for him to impress on them any new form. Doubtless, too, anyone seeking to establish a republic at the present time would find it easier to do so among uncultured men of the mountains than among dwellers in cities where civilization is corrupt; just as a sculptor will more easily carve a beautiful statue from rough marble than from marble already spoiled by a bungling workman. (*D* 141)

²⁸ For descriptions of this language as 'teleological' and 'Aristotelian', see Mark Hulliung, *Citizen Machiavelli* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 45; Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, pp. 207–08.

Putting it this way, Machiavelli implies that he does not think that man himself is unsound; the problem is with what educators and statesmen usually make of him.

Indeed, Machiavelli explicitly takes issue with those who, postulating an inherently wicked human nature, explain events and situations in terms of it and thereby evade taking responsibility for their own part in them. Thus, elaborating on a major theme of *The Prince*, Machiavelli in the *Discourses* argues that modern princes and republics who do not have 'their own troops for offence and defence [...] should ascribe this defect not to lack of men fit to become soldiers, but to their own fault in that they have neglected to train men to be soldiers'. Since men are always fit to become good soldiers, since there is never anything wrong with the basic human material out of which rulers make good armies, 'if where there are men, there are not soldiers, it is their ruler's fault, not the fault of the situation or of nature' (*D* 168). Later, he chastises those who account for the extraordinarily wicked conduct of the people of the Romagna before Pope Alexander VI got rid of the lords who ruled it by way of wicked human nature: 'it was the wickedness of the princes that gave rise to this, not the wicked nature of man' (*D* 483). While Machiavelli does not here say that man is not wicked, he does reject the postulate of natural human depravity as an explanation of what happened here and insists that 'it was the prince who was responsible' for the 'evils' in the Romagna (*D* 483). This kind of argument, surely alluding to the opening of *The War with Jugurtha*, becomes even more pronounced in the final sections of the *Discourses*, where Machiavelli emphasizes that the 'nature' of individuals, families, and peoples is a product of education, rules, customs, institutions, and ways of life (490–522). Because the passions and desires that constitute the 'nature' of men are not in fact inherent to them but are products mainly of how they are educated, trained, brought up, and ruled, because human nature is highly *imitative* and *malleable*, Machiavelli asserts, those princes and republics whose soldiers and citizens are corrupt have only themselves to blame.

All of this suggests that Machiavelli does not share Augustine's overwhelming sense of the depravity of human nature, the rottenness of what humans — regardless of whether they are uncouth mountain-men or 'civilized' city-dwellers — always are. It suggests rather that he is pessimistic about what men usually become as a result of their own choices and the conditions under which they live — it is not an untouched block of marble, but one that has been botched that is exceptionally difficult to carve into a beautiful statue. Machiavelli thus stands in basic agreement with Aristotle in asserting that the essential, unchanging being of humanity is a rather amoral, malleable, imitative life-form which, by virtue of a way of life,

becomes a structure of passion and desire within body and mind which may be a good or a bad 'nature'.

Machiavelli also sometimes writes as though he invests in the Aristotelian notion that certain forms of life are more or less perfect than others for humans. At the opening of Book I, for example, he writes that cities which 'have made a good beginning and are capable of improvement, may become perfect should something happen which provides the opportunity' (D 105). Proceeding to announce his intention of discussing 'the institutions of the city of Rome and what events conducted to its perfection', he observes that the 'blending' of the consulate, the senate, and the tribunate 'made a perfect commonwealth' (D 111). He later comments on specific events in the republic's early history which show 'how perfect the city then was' (D 427), and observes more generally that both individuals and groups of individuals living together in one republic 'are fashioned to the same state of perfection as characterizes that republic's mode of life' (D 491). One basic problem, however, for anyone who wishes, as the Romans did, 'to bring things to the pitch of perfection' is that good and evil are inextricably intertwined (D 505; see also 111, 195, 440). And it is perhaps because Machiavelli sometimes works on the assumption that some forms of socio-political organization are perfect for men that he does not rank all human desires and passions equally but, at least in concluding his critique of Caesar and other tyrants, claims that men cannot 'desire anything better' than to make virtuous a republic that has grown corrupt (D 138).

This notion that specific forms of behavior and society are, if not perfect, then at least more appropriate than others to the human animal (simply by virtue of what that animal is) surfaces in other passages in *The Prince* and the *Discourses*. In the later work, for example, Machiavelli refers to how the world must occasionally be purged, 'so that mankind, being reduced to comparatively few and humbled by adversity, may adopt a more appropriate form of life and grow better' (D 290). That it makes sense to Machiavelli to contemplate individual lives as being whole and well formed as opposed to incomplete and marred is clear from his description of Cyrus who was entirely free from 'pride, cruelty, licentiousness and other vices by which the lives of men are marred' (D 462). And in the famous chapter in *The Prince* on how the prince should honour his word, Machiavelli reasserts a basic tenet of Aristotelian and Ciceronian naturalism when he writes that 'there are two ways of fighting: by law or by force. The first way is natural to men, and the second to beasts' (Pr 56). Machiavelli, however, on this occasion differs from the ancients in asserting that the fact that a particular way of fighting is natural to man does not necessarily mean that man should always fight in that way. This difference is grounded in a simple empirical observation about the world: the way of life that is

natural for mankind — always fighting by law when one fights — leads to his destruction. This is so because men are usually ‘miserable creatures who would not keep their word to you’ (*Pr* 56). In light of these observations, Machiavelli recommends that the prince violate his nature and ‘act like a beast’ (*Pr* 56–57), but only where that is necessary to the survival of himself and the maintenance of his state. In saying this, Machiavelli is *not* saying that man *is* a beast and that fighting by force (which in this passage seems to include fox-like fraud) is therefore natural to him. He is saying that even though fighting by force is unnatural to him, he should nevertheless do so in those situations where doing so is necessary for him to survive and maintain his power (*assuming* that he wishes to survive and to maintain power). Apart from those situations, however, he recommends that man fight in the way which is appropriate to what he is by nature. Machiavelli here thus does not deny that a certain way of life is natural for man; he is just less impressed by this fact than were the ancients.

In addition to displaying, or writing in a way which requires, significant commitments to ancient conceptions of man, Machiavelli in *The Prince* and the *Discourses* also occasionally mildly assents to the Christian conception of man as the creature of God who, because that God wills things for it, has a particular end or purpose and has some freedom and, by the grace of God, opportunity to achieve that end. In *The Prince*, for example, he briefly discusses Moses as one who, drawing on his own virtue, ‘executed what God commanded’ and one who ‘must be praised for the grace which made him worthy of speaking with God’ (18). Those who use cruelty well (for the good of one’s subjects) may somewhat enhance their position with God and with men (*Pr* 30). God himself exalts and sustains ‘ecclesiastical principalities’, such as the papacy (*Pr* 37). And in the famous final exhortation to the Medici, Machiavelli speaks of God as an agent that wills, ordains, and favours particular things for Italy and man at large, and who wishes men to exercise their ‘free will’ to claim the glory that belongs to them. In the *Discourses*, he at one point argues not for the abandonment of Christianity but for an ‘interpretation’ of it ‘in terms of virtue’ which would teach that ‘religion permits us to exalt and defend the fatherland’, and ‘that it also wishes us to love and honour it, and to train ourselves to be such that we may defend it’ (*D* 278–79). As Nederman observes, Machiavelli’s references to Fortune as a significant influence upon human affairs is not necessarily inconsistent with medieval Christian views of human agency and history.²⁹ And as de Grazia observes, Machiavelli explicitly affirms the Christian vision of

²⁹ Cary Nederman, ‘Amazing Grace: Fortune, God, and Free Will in Machiavelli’s Thought’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 60 (1999), 617–38.

unfallen and fallen human nature in some of his other writings, such as his poems 'On Ambition' and 'The Ass', and 'The Exhortation to Penitence'.³⁰

As we will see in the next chapter, it is because Aristotelian and Christian ideas of ways of life that are appropriate to human nature still have a hold on him that Machiavelli does not make a clean break with ancient and Christian understandings of virtue. But if Machiavelli does not make a clean break with ancients and Christians when it comes to human nature, he still breaks with them. The references to Moses and his God in *The Prince* and the *Discourses* are few. Rather than treating it as a sacred account which therefore differs in a fundamental respect from pagan books, Machiavelli usually cites and reads the Bible simply as one among other histories which provide 'examples' and 'proof' for his claims about what man is and how he should behave as a soldier and statesman.³¹ As we will see in Chapter 5, the *prevailing* account of the causes of human experience in these two works is naturalistic, and there is little evidence to support the view that Machiavelli's use of 'fortune' conforms with medieval Christian usage rather than the usage of that term that Machiavelli found in Polybius, Sallust, and Livy. Nowhere in the *Discourses* does Machiavelli explicitly refer to God's grace (*grazia*) as something men require in order to act and succeed, and he never explains Roman success in terms of human free will acting in conjunction with God's grace. Indeed, as Pocock cogently argues, though in *The Prince* Machiavelli may not be entirely free from the need to visualize the establishment of virtuous political societies as the work of grace, he is in the *Discourses*. The soul, conceived as an entity that survives death and, depending on what it has done in this world, knows either eternal pain or bliss in the afterlife is not a significant presence in either *The Prince* or the *Discourses*. That Machiavelli asserts Christian views of man in some works, such as the 'Exhortation to Penitence', does not necessarily mean that he is committed to those assertions and their implications in works of an entirely different *genre* which are produced on entirely different occasions, works such as *The Prince* and the *Discourses*. And his appeal to Christian sentiment at the end of *The Prince* may be reasonably seen as part of an attempt to *persuade* the Medici family (a member of which was the Pope) to save Italy. All of this suggests that Machiavelli's commitment to Christian

³⁰ Sebastian de Grazia, *Machiavelli in Hell* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989), pp. 73–76. But see Maurizio Viroli's more sceptical assessment of the commitments to Christian thought Machiavelli displays in these and other texts, in *Niccolo's Smile: A Biography of Machiavelli*, trans. by Antony Shugaar (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2000).

³¹ See the references to David (*Pr* 45; *D* 166, 176) and Moses (*D* 102, 133, 296, 486).

understandings of human nature is weak and less significant than de Grazia and Nederman claim.

Within the discourse that *prevails* in *The Prince* and the *Discourses*, neither is man the rational, political animal of the ancients. Though still a composite entity of body and some kind of mental faculty or ability, human nature is not described as being distinct from and superior to animals by virtue of possessing reason (*ragione*). Indeed, reason, conceived as an independent element of human nature which vies with passion and appetite for the 'government' of the soul and which, having won the battle, makes it virtuous, makes no significant appearance in *The Prince* or the *Discourses*. Neither does reason conceived as the faculty by virtue of which men may be just to each other and live together at peace. There is only some kind of mental faculty or mind (*mente, animo*), and this faculty seems to be something that man shares with animals that are capable of fraud and deceit, such as foxes. The passions, appetites, and desires, moreover, not to mention the beasts with which man shares them, generally have much more positive associations with drive, energy, greatness, and even virtue in Machiavelli than they do in the ancients. This of course means that he displays a strong inclination to abandon the Aristotelian and Ciceronian view that, in large part by virtue of the rational principle which distinguishes man from the beasts and allows him to reason and speak eloquently, mankind reaches its full development and fulfills itself through active engagement in political life or contemplation. This in turn means, as several scholars have observed, that Machiavelli displays a strong inclination to reject the notion of natural human ends.³²

That Machiavelli is strongly inclined to reject the notion of natural ends does not mean that he does not himself betray preferences for certain specific ends: he prefers worldly glory to contempt for mundane things as 'man's highest good' (*D* 278); military victory to defeat; empire to self-containment; self-preservation and the preservation of the fatherland to their destruction; civic greatness to civil meekness; republics and kingdoms to tyranny; praise and renown to blame and infamy;

³² Leo Strauss, *What is Political Philosophy?* (Glencoe: Free Press, 1959), pp. 42; Isaiah Berlin, 'The Originality of Machiavelli', in *Against the Current* (London: Hogarth Press, 1979), pp. 25–79 (p. 37); Rahe, 'Situating Machiavelli', p. 293; Quentin Skinner, 'The Idea of Negative Liberty: Machiavellian and Modern Perspectives', in *Renaissance Virtues*, pp. 186–212; Vickie Sullivan, *Machiavelli, Hobbes, and the Formation of a Liberal Republicanism in England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 33. Whereas Rahe rightly observes that Machiavelli breaks with ancient Roman republicans by denying that mankind has natural ends, Skinner claims that he follows them by doing so. Skinner is mistaken in claiming that the notion of natural human ends was wholly foreign to the Roman authors.

virtue over vice and corruption. And in some cases, he *ranks* some of these preferred ends over others: in both *The Prince* and the *Discourses*, for example, he ranks maintaining one's rule and saving the fatherland over being virtuous in the traditional sense (which is a far cry from dismissing being virtuous in the traditional sense (*Pr* 56–58, 63; *D* 514–15)). That is why, in cases where doing wrong, in the sense of violating the traditional virtues, would prevent one from losing one's rule or prevent the fatherland from being destroyed, he recommends it, while in most other cases he favours doing right (though in the case of Giovampagolo Baglioni, he appears to rank the sheer 'grandeur' of some deeds over their ethical quality, and therefore condemns Baglioni for failing to be 'magnificently bad' and slaughtering the Pope and the cardinals who came to depose him when he had the chance (*D* 177–78)).

But in many cases, Machiavelli refrains from offering any kind of justification for preferring some ends over others, with the result that his preferences come across as being nothing more and nothing less than just that — preferences he and others happen to have, ones which in many cases he *could* have justified by way of the old standards (God, Nature, Reason) but which he does not justify in these ways, apparently because he cannot bring himself to commit to them. In addition, Machiavelli often counsels men in how to achieve ends of which he disapproves, or which he at least ranks lower than others. Thus, the preference he betrays on some occasions for republics over principalities does not prevent him from counselling men on how to establish and maintain principalities. And rather than simply rejecting the 'view to tyranny' as an unnatural, irrational, or evil ambition, Machiavelli on several occasions speaks as though it is simply one ambition among others men may come to have, and he counsels them in how to fulfill it. In his discussion of the Decemvirate in the *Discourses*, for example, he counsels both 'those whose aim is to maintain the freedom of a republic' and 'those who plan to bring it into subjection' (210), and he later advises 'citizens who in republics take up any enterprise, whether in favour of liberty or with a view to tyranny' (429; also 176). True, Aristotle, too, counsels the would-be tyrant, and very shrewd counsel it is (*P* 1313a11–1315b11), but he does not display the indifference to tyranny that Machiavelli does on some occasions. Finally, as we will see in more detail later, Machiavelli frequently refrains from telling men what goals or ends they should have, but tells them what to do *if* they want to achieve any given end. Machiavelli's counsel, that is to say, very often takes a conditional form, as though he is working on the premise that the ends men are to pursue are to be determined not by what they are, but by whatever it is they happen to want. He often, but not always, works on the premise that the only 'fulfilment' human animals may know is the fulfilment of the desires and passions

which happen to have formed, or which have been deliberately cultivated by themselves, parents, legislators, and educators within them.

Paradise Lost

Unfallen Mankind

In order to understand fully Milton's vision of the nature of those humans who are described by some of the major figures in republican tradition and to see how it both conforms with and differs from that description, it is necessary to understand his vision of the nature of the first two humans. For one of the major ways in which the poem delineates human nature as we and the republicans know it — fallen human nature, that is — is by way of contrasting it with the nature of Adam and Eve before the fall. But this is necessary also because there are some indications that, even though, according to the poem, man has changed radically as a result of the fall, some features of unfallen human nature persist in its fallen condition.

Unlike all of the texts we have been considering, *Paradise Lost* represents mankind as the product of a deliberate act of creation performed by a beneficent and omnipotent deity, an act that Raphael (in Book VII) and Adam (in Book VIII) describe in considerable detail. These accounts, and numerous other references to God's act of creating man and the world over the course of the poem, make clear that God did not simply make man, but that he made him *for* particular actions and ways of existing and *to* do certain things. This is suggested early in the poem by the Son when, speaking to God, he presumes that God will not abolish the entire 'Creation' (which includes mankind) and unmake for Satan 'what for thy glory thou hast made' (III. 163–64). That God makes man in particular *for* and *to* is confirmed by Raphael in Book VII where he prefaces his account of God's creation of man with the observation that mankind was to be the 'masterwork', which

endu'd

With Sanctity of Reason, might erect
His Stature, and upright with Front serene
Govern the rest, self-knowing, and from thence
Magnanimous to correspond with Heav'n,
But grateful to acknowledge whence his good
Descends, thither with heart and voice and eyes
Directed in Devotion, to adore
And worship God Supreme who made him chief
Of all his works: (VII. 507–16)

Raphael here indicates that God does not just happen to endow man with reason, but that he does so *so that* he can do things God intends him to do, such as govern the animals and acknowledge, adore, and worship God (see also XI. 339). That God does indeed create man to do things such as to adore and glorify him, but also to create other humans who do this as well, is confirmed by Raphael when he then observes that Eve was created ‘for Race’ (VII. 530). The angels, too, immediately after the creation, observe that God created man in his image

to dwell [on earth]
And worship him, and in reward to rule
Over his Works, on Earth, in Sea, or Air,
And multiply a race of worshippers
Holy and just: (VII. 627–31)

As Uriel explains to the disguised Satan earlier in the poem, God made man to serve him, indeed, ‘To serve him better’ than the fallen angels did (III. 680). That man was made or formed for and to do certain things is again asserted in the first description of Adam and Eve provided by the poem, where we learn that

For contemplation hee and valor [was] form’d,
For softness shee and sweet attractive Grace,
Hee for God only, shee for God in him: (IV. 297–99)

In Book IX, responding to Eve’s suggestion that they work alone, Adam observes that ‘not to irksome toil, but to delight / He made us, and delight to Reason joined’ (IX. 242–43). After the fall, the Son confirms several of these claims: Eve was ‘Adorn’d [. . .] and lovely to attract’ Adam’s love, but not his subjection; she was made ‘for’ Adam, whose ‘part / And person’ was to bear rule (X. 149–56). Finally, in his terrible lament after the fall, Adam must face the fact that he failed to do what he knows God made him to do: ‘God made thee of choice his own, and of his own / To serve him, thy reward was of his grace’ (X. 766–67).

These assertions that God made man *for* and *to* have two major meanings, the first of which is that God made him with the *will* and *intention* that he do certain things and exist for the sake of certain things. This is implied by the locutions themselves, but becomes explicit on occasion, as when Adam says to Raphael that, though he knows that God made him with the intention of being first, Eve sometimes appears to him ‘As one intended first, not after made / Occasionally’ (VIII. 555–56). And it is because God made man in this way, that he has an end or purpose: to do the things God wills it to do, to live in the way God intended it to live when he created it and as he continues to sustain it over time. From one perspective, it may appear that this purpose is manifold, since, in making and sustaining

human nature, God wills and intends that it do all kinds of things: besides worshipping, acknowledging, extolling, praising, serving, thanking, and adoring him, humans are to multiply, to govern their appetites, to subdue and possess the earth and all its creatures, to do the work of body and mind God appoints for them (IV. 618), to be happy and blissful (IV. 724–29), to love each other (conjugal love is ‘not the lowest end of human life’ (IX. 241)), to use and admire the world God framed for them (IV. 691–92), to eat freely of all fruits of paradise (VIII. 322), and to abstain from the tree of knowledge (to ‘persevere’ in not eating of its fruit, as Raphael puts it (V. 525, VIII. 639)). Though, because they are both human, the end of Adam is the same in many important respects as the end of Eve, because they also differ from each other in important ways, their ends also significantly differ from each other: Adam is to contemplate and govern Eve, who is to obey and converse with Adam, take care of domestic good, cultivate her grace and softness, be desirable to him, and bear children. From another perspective, however, there is really only one purpose or end of human nature, since all of these activities are the same in the sense that they are all activities willed by God. As the narrator elliptically puts it summing up the creation, God is the ‘Author and end of all things’ (VII. 591). Adam confirms this and partly explains what it means when, in thanking Raphael for revealing to him the war in heaven and forewarning him, he claims to receive God’s admonishment ‘with solemn purpose to observe / Immutably his sovran will, the end / Of what we are’ (VII. 78–80). And as Michael reminds Adam after he has fallen, he was ‘created [...] to nobler end’ than pleasure, namely, ‘Holy and pure, conformity divine’ (XI. 605–06). God being the end of man, man’s end or purpose is to do his will.

But simply doing God’s will is not enough, not at least when it comes to outward actions, and Adam’s use of the word ‘observe’, which has connotations of respecting and regarding with a certain attitude, is an indication of this fact. For those agents who are free and rational, such as humans and angels, having God as an end means that they must also do his will for the right reasons, in the proper spirit. God makes this clear when, for example, he commends Abdiel upon his return to God’s camp: ‘for this was all thy care / To stand approv’d in sight of God, though Worlds / Judg’d thee perverse’ (VI. 35–37). It is not so much what Abdiel did, as the ‘care’ out of which he did it — a care which was not affected by the humiliation he suffered because of it — that is the important thing here. That the ‘care’ out of which rational agents such as men and angels obey God is a crucial dimension of the end for all rational agents is also indicated by the Son when he says to God, ‘thine is to decree, / Mine both in Heav’n and Earth to do thy will / Supreme, that thou in mee thy Son belov’d / May’st ever rest well pleas’d’

(X. 68–71). It is the Son's not just to do God's will, but to do it *'that'* (i.e. so that) God is pleased with him. The Son does God's will, that is, with the aim and intention of pleasing him. Thus, if 'obeying God' means not just performing those outward actions God commands but performing them out of a care to stand approved in his sight, then obeying God is the primary end of man and all rational agents. But if 'obeying God' means, as it often does in the poem and much of the commentary on it, simply performing those outward actions God commands (such as refraining from eating a fruit of a certain kind), then obeying God may not be said to be the end of man. Indeed, on this definition, obeying God might constitute a violation of the end of man and even displease God, for you might be obeying God out of the hunger to hear him speak those golden words he speaks to the Son and which Satan must dream of being spoken to him: 'all Power / I give thee' (III. 317–18). And it seems that Satan himself did in fact do just this before he rebelled: as Gabriel sharply observes to him,

who more than thou
Once fawn'd, and cring'd, and servilely ador'd
Heav'n's awful Monarch? wherefore but in hope
To dispossess him, and thyself to reign? (IV. 958–61)

Like the other angels in heaven, Satan adored God, but he did so not out of the care to please and honour him but 'servilely', in a way that debased himself. And the disdain with which Gabriel speaks to Satan on this occasion makes clear that *that* kind of adoration is worthless. Mammon, too, makes the point in a way when he observes how 'wearisome' it would be for the fallen angels to worship one they hate (II. 247–49). On a lean definition of 'obedience' as simply performing the outward actions one is commanded to perform, the end of man is thus not just obedience to God, but obedience to God out of the care to stand approved in his sight.

It would have been possible for God to have made human nature in such a way that it was constrained to do or not to do what he made it to do. But God did not do this, and the poem is most emphatic on this point. God made man in such a way that he was capable of both performing the 'voluntary service he [God] requires' (V. 529) and not performing it. For as God himself observes,

I form'd them free, and free they must remain,
Till they enthrall themselves: I else must change
Thir nature, and revoke the high Decree
Unchangeable, Eternal, which ordain'd
Their freedom. (III. 124–28)

Raphael later confirms this crucial point: God 'ordain'd thy will / By nature free, not over-rul'd by Fate / Inextricable, or strict necessity' (V. 526–28). Having

ordained that human nature be free in the sense of not being forced to do anything by fate and necessity, it *is* free in this sense, and it is not prevented by such external elements from voluntarily and happily performing the service God requires. But being free to serve God, man is also free not to serve him. Were human nature and its world made in such a way that this nature was *forced* to serve God, it would not be free to serve, its 'service of God' would be involuntary, and it would, ultimately, be service to that which forced him to be free, not God.

In these passages, Raphael and God indicate that the freedom of humans is a freedom from external forces such as fate, necessity, and God himself, but they and several other characters indicate that this freedom is a freedom from other elements as well: humans are free, or capable of being free, from the forces of appetite and passion which do, however, have the potential to 'overrule', 'govern', and 'enthrall' them. God makes this clear when he observes that, as a result of the fall, man's 'lapsed powers' are 'forfeit and enthrall'd / By sin to foul exorbitant desires' (III. 176–77) with the result that he is in a 'sinful state' (III. 186). Raphael of course attempts to prevent this from happening by telling Adam to 'govern well thy appetite' (VII. 546) and warning him to 'take heed lest Passion sway / Thy Judgment to do aught, which else free Will / Would not admit' (VIII. 635–37). Adam explains to Eve that being free from appetite and passion in this way is a matter of making sure that reason, rather than appetite and passion, governs the will: 'God left free the Will, for what obeys / Reason, is free, and Reason he made right' (IX. 351–52). After the fall, we learn that prelapsarian human nature was indeed free, for the will was answerable to reason rather than appetite and passion (IX. 1122–31). As Michael explains to Adam later in Book XII, 'Since thy original lapse, true Liberty / Is lost, which always with right Reason dwells / Twinn'd, and from her hath no dividual being' (XII. 83–85). Unfallen human nature, then, is free in the sense that it is free from some forces that are external to it (such as necessity and fate) and free from some forces that are internal to it (such as passion and appetite). Humans are free *from* these forces *to* fulfill their purpose, which is to serve God voluntarily and out of the proper care for him.

It would also have been possible for God, being omnipotent, to have made human nature and its world in such a way that, though free to do what God intended him to do, it could only do so with great difficulty or even pain. This might seem an idle speculation, but there is one point at which Adam himself feels that this is in fact the case: to continue to obey God in the face of Eve's disobedience, Adam feels he must endure great pain. Indeed, he feels that 'the Link of Nature' and 'the Bond of Nature' (IX. 914, 956) draw him not to persist in obedience, but to share in Eve's disobedience. In addition, it seems clear that though Adam and

Eve are sufficient to withstand Satan's temptations, they nevertheless must exert themselves — they must keep their reason erect — in order to serve God. But though there may arise situations in which doing what God intends them to do may be difficult and even in some sense painful, Adam and Eve may for the most part do so with ease. This is because God makes man for and to not just in the sense that he makes him with the intention and will that he do certain things, but in the sense that he makes him in such a way that he can efficiently perform with ease and even delight the things God wills him to do. Just as it is in part because a craftsman makes a wind-harp to make sounds when the wind strikes it a wind-harp makes sounds when the wind strikes it easily and without damaging itself, so, in part because God made man to serve him, man can do so easily, without damaging or destroying himself. This is the point Adam makes when, referring to the divine command not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge, he observes to Eve that God requires of them 'no other service than to keep / This one, this easy charge' (IV. 420–21), and adds, 'let us not think hard / One easy prohibition, who enjoy / Free leave so large to all things else' (IV. 432–34). He and Eve then observe how easy and delightful it is for them to do all the other things — such as gardening, loving, mating, worshipping, praying, conversing — they rightly feel God intends them to do. As even Satan must confess to himself, doing what God made him to do — 'his service' — is not 'hard' (IV. 45). When, moreover, Raphael later instructs Adam on the nature of true wisdom, Adam thanks him for teaching him 'to live / The easiest way' (VIII. 182–83). Unfallen human nature is thus not only free to fulfill or not to fulfill its purpose, but it is made in such a way that, should it choose to do so, it can do so easily and in a way which is delightful and beneficial to it, even if in some cases it may involve forms of strenuous exertion.

Unfallen human nature is, moreover, *disposed* in and of itself and independently of experience to fulfill its end, though Adam and Eve also display what, in relation to their end, are some wayward dispositions. Eve, for example, displays an inclination towards narcissism which inclines her neither to worship God nor to serve and love Adam. And these dispositions are resisted and opposed by what might fairly be called 'eloquence' and a little force: 'a voice' intervenes to draw Eve away from the lake in which she sees and admires her own 'smooth wat'ry image' (IV. 480), and even then she turns back to it and might have continued to dwell on it and 'pin'd with vain desire' had not Adam spoken and 'seiz'd' her hand (IV. 465–91). As Adam later describes the scene to Raphael, he had to woo her with 'pleaded reason' to bring her to the nuptial bower (VIII. 510). Adam, on the other hand, as he confesses to Raphael, is somewhat disposed to overvalue Eve, to give himself over to the passions and desires she produces in him, to submit to her (VIII. 521–59).

Though, as Raphael claims, 'Nature [. . .] hath done her part' (VIII. 561), Adam seems to display some natural disposition to uxoriousness and even idolatry. But it is hardly the case that Adam drags Eve kicking and screaming to the nuptial bower, that praying morning and night is felt by them to be a chore which they perform grudgingly, that they would really rather be doing something else all day than garden, that they drag themselves out of their rose-petal bed each morning to rule the pesky animal kingdom. On the contrary, Adam and Eve commonly display an alacrity in relation to their ends, they harbor many strong dispositions and instincts which, though not *causing* them to fulfill their end, clearly incline them to move in that direction and render moving in that direction pleasant to them. As Milton puts it in *Of Christian Doctrine*, 'man was by nature good and holy, and was naturally disposed to do right', and he was 'drawn' to performing good works 'by his own natural impulses without being commanded'.³³ And if we think of virtue in terms of dispositions or qualities of character which incline one to fulfill one's end, this means that unfallen human nature is by nature virtuous.

* * *

Because God wills and intends things for it when he makes it, human nature, then, has an end in the sense of a way of life that is proper to it and a way of life that it ought to aim at. This end is essentially to serve God out of care for him, and human nature is free to achieve or not to achieve this end. But God made it in such a way that it is disposed and inclined in and of itself to achieve its end, and should it choose to do so, it can in most circumstances easily do so well and with delight. In addition, since acting freely is, according to Adam, God, Raphael, and Michael, a matter of exercising the will in accordance with reason (rather than passion and appetite), and since the end of man is an ongoing act of freely chosen and performed service, man's fulfilment of his nature is grounded in the exercise of reason. In making the exercise of reason a precondition of inner freedom and therefore a precondition of man's fulfilment of his end and purpose, and in thinking of reason as an element of man that is distinct from other elements such as body, passion, appetite, and fancy, Milton departs from his Old Testament source and aligns himself in an important way with ways of thinking about human nature we have observed in the ancient republicans (but which are also evident in Stoic and some of the Christian commentary on these sources).³⁴

³³ *Of Christian Doctrine*, p. 352.

³⁴ These passages indicate that man is free essentially by virtue of having and exercising properly reason, not by virtue of being made of a special matter that is 'animate, self-active, and free', as Stephen Fallon claims in *Milton Among the Philosophers: Poetry and Materialism in Seventeenth-*

In so doing, he also distances himself from the voluntarism that Stanley Fish and others have attributed to him over the last thirty-five years. On Fish's most recent statement of the case, Milton sees man achieving his end of observing the will of God essentially on the basis of convictions about the nature of God which 'are supported (at least as far as one knows) by nothing firmer than themselves', 'assumptions that are their own and only support'. He fulfills his end by 'choosing (deciding, affirming, testifying)' where these actions are ones 'for which there are no guidelines and no guarantees'. Since Fish understands 'conceptions [...] which are grounded only in their own strength' as faith, and since he also understands faith as 'a positive exertion of the will', the foundation of doing as God wills as Milton sees them is thus not reason, but faith, where that is a result of an exercise of freedom that is totally independent of reason.³⁵ In providing this account of Milton's view of how unfallen human nature achieves its end, Fish overlooks one of the major premises of the poem: no agent can act freely unless it (1) possesses the faculty of reason, (2) exercises that faculty in such a way that it chooses to do something, and (3) acts in accordance with its results. Given this premise, and given that the end of man is to act freely, man cannot achieve his end unless he exercises and acts in accordance with reason.

There may, however, appear to be an exception to the rule that in order to achieve its end, human nature must exercise its reason. For in attempting to resist Satan's temptation, Eve says,

But of this Tree we may not taste nor touch;
God so commanded, and left that Command
Sole Daughter of his voice; the rest, we live
Law to ourselves, our Reason is our Law. (IX. 651–54)

Fish and other critics such as Lewalski cite this passage to justify the view that the command not to eat is, as Lewalski puts it, 'outside the purview of nature and reason'.³⁶ But if this were the case, then God would really be commanding Adam and Eve to surrender the ground of their freedom to act and *then* to act. Action under these conditions could not be freely performed and could therefore not count as

Century England (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 81. If this were the case, everything, by virtue of being made of this matter, would be free, a postulate which the poem explicitly denies.

³⁵ Stanley Fish, *How Milton Works* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), pp. 506, 554. See also Fish, *Surprised by Sin*, 2nd edn (London: MacMillan, 1967; repr. 1997), pp. 241–54.

³⁶ Barbara Lewalski, *The Life of John Milton: A Critical Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), p. 478; Fish, *Surprised by Sin*, pp. 241–54.

voluntary service. God, then, would require chosen, voluntary service (reason also is choice) all of the time in relation to all things with the exception of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, in relation to which he would require involuntary, unchosen service all of the time.

But Eve's remark does not mean that reason is irrelevant to all decisions concerning the forbidden fruit. She is merely saying that when it comes to the Tree of Knowledge, they have a direction for action which they do not have when it comes to any of the other fruit-bearing trees in the garden. That direction derives from God, but in saying this, she is not saying that the exercise of reason is totally irrelevant to following that direction. That reason properly enters into their understanding of the command and their choice to obey it is in fact clear from the way Adam talks about the prohibition in Book IV: here Adam does *not* say how entirely incomprehensible, irrational, and arbitrary he finds the command and then throw up his hands with a comment to the effect of 'well, let's obey anyway'. He rather *observes* the facts that the tree is 'the only sign of our obedience' and that it is placed among 'so many signs of power and rule' and then moves to the resolution that they should obey. The crucial thing here is the indication of *how* he moves to this resolution: 'Then let us not think hard / One easy prohibition'. Rather than saying 'however strange it all seems, let us . . .', or 'though these signs in no way seem to suggest we should, still, let us . . .', Adam moves to the resolve to obey the command by using the word '*then*', then in the sense of 'it clearly follows that' or 'from these signs we may reasonably infer that'. Moreover, as he continues, Adam seems not to be surrendering reason, but further exercising it by way of providing evidence for obeying the command: *after all*, he implicitly says, they can 'enjoy free leave so large to all things else in the garden'. *In light of these considerations*, he implies as he works towards the conclusion of what feels more like a reasoned argument than an abandonment of one, we should not just obey but also 'praise him, and extol / His bounty' (IV. 436–37). In short, obeying the command strikes him as being an eminently reasonable thing to do. This is in part because, as he later observes, the 'command / Single, is yet so just' (V. 551–52). Choosing to obey it out of these considerations and thoughts, he perseveres in what — according to the narrator, God, Raphael, Michael, and Adam himself — counts as the voluntary service God requires.³⁷

³⁷ See also Marshall Grossman's view of this speech as 'a model of reason applied to experience', in *Authors to Themselves: Milton and the Revelation of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 81. For further observations on Milton's rationalism, see Fallon, "Elect above the rest", and William Walker, 'On Reason, Faith, and Freedom in *Paradise Lost*', *Studies in English Literature*, 47 (2007), 143–59.

For the purposes of assessing Milton's relationship with republicanism, it is important to see that in defining the end of unfallen human nature in this way, Milton grants no importance to the life of the citizen and statesman which is so central to the ends of human nature as the ancient republicans understand them. There is, first of all, no indication in the poem that God made man for political society in the sense that he made him with the intention and will that, once there were sufficient numbers of humans, they would exercise civic virtue in a Greek *polis*, a Roman republic, an Italian city-state, or an early modern European nation-state. Certainly, God grants man dominion over the earth and wills that he subdue and rule over it, and he grants Adam authority and rule over Eve. Unfallen mankind, moreover, may be said to exist within a hierarchical cosmic order subject to a natural law, similar to that imagined by Cicero. But none of this means that Adam and Eve are subjects or citizens existing within what either the ancients, Machiavelli, or Milton would have thought of as a political society. The society of Adam and Eve is essentially a domestic, familial society, an *oikos* rather than a *polis*, and all indications are that, as long as had they stood, it would have remained as one, regardless of how many children they had. Had he remained in paradise, not Adam's subjects but his 'Sons' might have visited to be shown by him those places where God vouchsafed his presence to man (XI. 315–19). Adam's 'generations' would have returned to paradise to revere not their lord, king, sultan, consuls, nobles, senators, ephors, guardians, tribunes, governors, ministers, *podesta*, members of parliament, or rulers, but their *father*, their 'Progenitor' (XI. 342–46). While for seventeenth-century patriarchalists, such as Robert Filmer, fathers were lords by virtue of being fathers, Milton shows no inclination to think so either in his epic or elsewhere.³⁸ The implication is that the life of the citizen and statesman is not the life God intends man to live when there are two living in blissful solitude, when there would have been enough humans to take care of all the work in the garden, or when there would have been a human race 'To fill the Earth' (IV. 733). Neither are Adam and Eve endowed with an *impulse* or *desire* to live and exercise civic virtue within a *polis*. Because God does not intend them to live in political societies, and because they have no desire to do so, neither they, nor God, nor the angels see a future in politics for unfallen man. And insofar as Milton presents the unfallen state of mankind as a possibility or model for fallen man, he suggests that politics is not a road to human fulfilment for fallen man either.

³⁸ For Milton's antipatriarchalism in both *Paradise Lost* and the prose, see Erin Murphy, 'Milton's "Birth Abortive": Remaking Family at the End of *Paradise Lost*', *Milton Studies*, 43 (2004), 145–70.

There would have been a future, however, in a kind of evolution. For Raphael informs Adam that, had they stood, he and Eve might also have found themselves 'improv'd by tract of time', their bodies at last turned 'all to spirit', and that they could choose to live in earthly or heavenly paradises (V. 496–500). Commenting on this possibility, Adam observes that 'In contemplation of created things / By steps we may ascend to God' (V. 511–12). All of this conforms with God's observation before the creation that 'under long obedience tri'd', Adam and Eve and their unfallen progeny might eventually 'open to themselves at length the way' to heaven, 'And Earth be chang'd to Heav'n, and Heav'n to Earth, / One Kingdom, Joy and Union without end' (VII. 157–61). And, as Adam here suggests, he and Eve might have experienced this evolution through 'contemplation'. It is difficult here, and in many other passages where Milton uses terms which were commonly used to translate key terms in Aristotle, not to feel an allusion to the Greek philosopher Milton so commonly cites in his political prose. But in *Paradise Lost*, Milton rarely uses terms that were commonly used to translate key terms in ancient pagan texts to mean what the pagans used those key terms to mean, and his usage of 'contemplation' is no exception. First of all, the contemplation that is proper for Adam, and possibly Eve (since Adam says it is 'we' who may ascend to God by contemplation), is in no way incompatible with the 'labour' and 'work of body' that is also appointed by God for him. That work of body which Adam and Eve are to spend the greater part of their days performing Aristotle regarded as ignoble, servile, inimical to the life of virtue, and therefore best left for slaves and those incapable of the life of virtue (P 1258b35–40, 1277b34–1278a34, 1328b22–1329a2, 1339a6–10). In addition, contemplation is neither an activity which Adam and Eve are to love for its own sake, nor an activity for the sake of which they exist, but a means of achieving something else: ascending to God. Raphael, moreover, gently rebukes Adam for wondering about the heavenly bodies and 'Ent'ring on studious thoughts abstruse' (VIII. 40). Informing him that 'Heav'n is for thee too high', Raphael instructs him to be 'lowly wise' and to 'Think only what concerns thee and thy being' (VIII. 172–74). In so doing, Raphael directs Adam away from the Aristotelian conception of contemplation as an exercise of scientific rather than calculative or practical reason which is grounded in the intellectual virtue of philosophical rather than practical wisdom, and which aims at knowing and understanding, among other things, the heavenly bodies. Learning his lesson, Adam understands that 'the prime Wisdom' is 'not to know at large of things remote / From use, obscure and subtle, but to know / That which before us lies in daily life' (VIII. 191–94). Having learned this, Adam may well contemplate in the way God intended him to and in the way he can do well with ease and delight, but as a mode of thinking which will

not be directed to 'things remote from use' and which is perfectly consistent with the life of manual labour, his contemplation will be different from the activity of the philosopher.

Fallen Mankind

Whereas all of the republicans think of human nature as having remained essentially the same over the course of its entire existence, Milton envisions it as having existed in two radically different states which are separated from each other by an act performed by the first two human beings. Much of the poem is devoted to describing those two states and the act that separates them. As a chosen, voluntary violation of God's will, a violation of what God made man for, that act is in God's eye a 'revolt' (III. 117), 'Treason' (III. 207), a 'crime' (III. 215, 290) for which a 'penalty' or 'ransom' must be paid in order for justice to be served. Demanding that justice be served, that is, God wills that man pay for his crime. God indicates at the opening of Book III that he will accept two kinds of payment. Proclaiming 'Die hee or Justice must' (III. 210), he indicates that he shall deem justice to have been served by the immediate and permanent annihilation of mankind. But he goes on to observe that he would also deem the death of a just and loving mortal as adequate 'satisfaction, death for death' (III. 212). Observing this second possibility, the Son presents himself as 'a sacrifice / Glad to be offer'd' (III. 269–70), one who, out of filial obedience and love for man, will satisfy God's justice by paying 'The deadly forfeiture, and ransom set' (III. 221). This, however, does not let man off the hook — justice will still die unless he, too, pays a penalty. For as the Son later observes to God, in sacrificing himself for love of man, he can only 'mitigate' and not 'reverse' the doom of man, which is 'Death' (X. 76, XI. 40–41). Man, too, must die, not in the sense that he and his progeny be permanently wiped from the face of the earth, but in the sense that every individual human perish after many days. This death, moreover, will terminate an existence which is to be one of misery, pain, and sorrow: expressing God's will by way of his judgement and sentence on fallen mankind, the Son observes that until they 'to dust return', Adam and Eve will live, work, and multiply in 'sorrow' (X. 193–208). As God puts it in his official decree to the angels, once man has fallen, he wills that he leave the garden, 'to Till / The Ground whence he was taken, fitter soil' (XI. 97–98; my emphasis). Willing, as always, that justice live, God thus wills that man's existence be one of toil and 'woe' (XI. 60) terminated by death. Adam understands: 'dust', he says to Eve, is now their 'final rest and native home' (X. 1084–85). One of the grim puns that

pervades the final books is that the end of fallen human nature (what God wills for it) in this world is the end of human nature (its dissolution and death).

This end differs in two essential ways from the end of unfallen man. First, it is not so much a form of choosing and acting as it is a form of suffering and enduring. Certainly man is to work, multiply, and perform some other actions. But willing that man live in sorrow and die, God wills not that man freely, voluntarily *do* something or *perform* in some way, but essentially that he *be subject* to various forces and processes, that his life be a passion in the old sense of that term deriving from the Latin *passus*, to suffer. Second, this end is *imposed* upon him, regardless of what he wishes, thinks, chooses, or wills. Whereas before the fall man is free to fulfill or not to fulfill his end in its entirety as determined by God's will, after the fall he is not. For after the fall, human nature is *forced* — by what it is in and of itself, by various agents such as the Son and Michael, and by his environment — to experience and do part of what God wills. Thus, Michael and paradise force Adam and Eve from paradise; having been expelled, Adam and Eve have no choice but to till the soil in a harsh clime; they cannot avoid suffering in the new world; they cannot choose to ascend the chain of being to become as angels; they can do nothing while alive to evade their own dissolution and death (they can, however, commit suicide or remain childless). That fallen human nature is not free to do any of these things is made clear in Book X where Satan, Sin, Death, and God all recognize that Sin and Death come into the possession of and exercise dominion over the earth and all of its inhabitants, including man, who will be the 'thrall' of Sin and Death (X. 402). As God puts it in one of the great tough lines of the poem, 'Justice shall not return as bounty scorned' (X. 54). This is because man is not *free* to scorn God's justice as he was free in paradise to scorn his bounty (though, as the syntax and punctuation of this line also allow, God's justice is in an important sense a further manifestation of his bounty).

Just as unfallen human nature is well suited for what God wills for it, so fallen nature is as well. But whereas unfallen human nature is well suited in this respect because God framed it in a particular way, unfallen nature is well suited for the existence God wills it to have because of what it becomes as a result of its having committed 'the mortal Sin / Original' (IX. 1003–04). That is to say that whereas God intervenes through his angels to reframe the natural world in such a way as to make it a suitable environment for misery and sorrow (X. 648–714), he does not intervene immediately after the fall to *re-create* man in such a way that he will be suited for the new life of tilling and sorrow ending in dust God now has in mind for him. Rather, human nature becomes this kind of thing directly as a result of what it is and does. Thus, in Book IX, having disobeyed, Adam and Eve burn in

lust, gratify that lust, sleep, and awaken to find themselves entirely changed. That the narrator does not identify God as being in any way involved in this process is only to be expected since, as God earlier insists, 'they enthrall themselves' (III. 125). Immediately after the fall, however, a crucial dimension of human nature is up for grabs, and God must act in order to prevent man from doing something which could result in his having a nature unsuited to his new ends, and which would prevent justice from being done:

Lest therefore his now bolder hand
Reach also of the Tree of Life, and eat,
And live for ever, dream at least to live
For ever, to remove him I decree,
And send him from the Garden forth to Till
The Ground whence he was taken, fitter soil. (XI. 93–98)

Though God later says that it was he who 'provided Death' (XI. 61), his observation here indicates that the act of committing the crime on its own is sufficient to cause human nature to change from being immortal to being mortal. But in order to keep it that way, God must intervene and banish man from paradise in order to deny him the opportunity of making himself immortal once again (or dreaming of being so) by eating of the Tree of Life.

The reason that this fallen human nature is suited for paying the penalty for its crime as God wills is that it is 'manifold in sin' (X. 16), 'corrupt', 'distempered', and 'depraved'. For by virtue of being corrupt, sinful, and depraved, human nature is subject to processes of decay leading to death. 'Dissolution' is, as God observes, 'wrought by Sin, that first / Distemper'd all things, and of incorrupt / Corrupted' (XI. 55–57). Sin makes the point when she instructs Death to feast on the plants and animals 'Till I in Man residing through the Race, / His thoughts, his looks, words, actions all infect, / And season him thy last and sweetest prey' (X. 607–09). Manifold in sin, thoroughly seasoned and infected by it, that is, man is now something which left to itself in its world decays until it dies — his life has become 'a slow-pac't evil, / A long day's dying', as Adam observes (X. 963–64). Whereas all of the republicans we have considered see physiological decay and dying as amoral processes which perfectly good humans and other animals undergo simply by virtue of being natural organisms, Milton here sees them as profound affronts to human dignity which derive directly from a nature that, as a result of its own actions, is inherently defective.

But besides qualifying him for the death God intends for him, what Michael calls man's 'natural pravity' (XII. 288) also qualifies him well for the misery, pain, sorrow, woe, and sweat which God wills him to experience before that end. First

of all, this natural pravity is repellent to the ideal environment of paradise: even had God not evicted him from paradise, it seems that the 'pure immortal Elements' there would in accordance with 'the Law of Nature' have forced him out, since they 'Eject him tainted now, and purge him off / As a distemper' (XI. 50–53).³⁹ The only environment which is now suitable for corrupted mankind is the corrupt, harsh natural environment which is brought about by his own sin and God's decree. In addition, the very processes of dissolution that lead to death will in many cases be a source of terrible pain and suffering, as Michael demonstrates in Book XI. It is, moreover, clear from the end of Book IX onwards that simply existing in a 'sinful state' (III. 186) is painful to humans: though they both feel intoxicated immediately after eating, and take 'thir fill of Love and Love's disport' (IX. 1042), Adam and Eve awaken to find that they are 'destitute and bare / Of all thir virtue' (IX. 1062–63). Having lost all of what, in relation to their unfallen state, is their virtue, they are overwhelmed by the sense of shame and feel 'Confounded' and 'abasht' (XI. 1064–65). They have, moreover, lost their peace of mind, for they are now subject to terrible passions:

high Winds worse within
 Began to rise, high Passions, Anger, Hate,
 Mistrust, Suspicion, Discord, and shook sore
 Thir inward State of Mind, calm Region once
 And full of Peace, now toss't and turbulent:
 For Understanding rul'd not, and the Will
 Heard not her lore, both in subjection now
 To sensual Appetite, who from beneath
 Usurping over sovran Reason claim'd
 Superior sway: (IX. 1122–31)

Despoiled of all their good, the first fallen humans are, in short, 'miserable' (IX. 1139), which is precisely what God, willing that they be justly punished for their crime against him, wants them to be.

Being manifold in sin also suits and qualifies fallen human nature to fulfill its end because it amounts to a loss of inner freedom. For being in a sinful state, or being 'distemper'd' as the narrator and God also put it (IX. 1131, 887, XI. 53–56), means that passion and appetite have displaced reason as governor of the will, and, as we have seen, the poem asserts that any agent whose will is dictated by passion and desire rather than reason is not free. Observing at the end of Book IX that as

³⁹ See John Rogers, *The Matter of Revolution: Science, Poetry, and Politics in the Age of Milton* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), pp. 147–61.

a result of the fall the will is subject to sensual appetite rather than reason, the narrator confirms God's earlier claim that man enthralls himself, and that man's 'lapsed powers' are 'forfeit and enthrall'd / By sin to foul exorbitant desires' (III. 125, 176–77). In disobeying God, Michael informs Adam, 'themselves they vilifi'd / To serve ungovern'd appetite' (XI. 516–17). That servitude, he later indicates, is not a punctual action, but a permanent condition:

Since thy original lapse, true Liberty
Is lost, which always with right Reason dwells
Twinn'd, and from her hath no dividual being;
Reason in man obscur'd, or not obey'd,
Immediately inordinate desires
And upstart Passions catch the Government
From Reason, and to servitude reduce
Man till then free. (XII. 83–90)

Having lost inner freedom, man is now incapable of not just freely serving God as he was created to do, but, strictly speaking, freely doing *anything*, since you can only voluntarily *do* something if you act in accordance with reason, and fallen man, it would appear, is incapable of doing that. Were the end of fallen man a form of voluntary service, fallen man would thus by nature in an essential sense be unsuited for his end. But because the end of fallen man is essentially no longer a matter of choosing and doing (which require reason and freedom) but of suffering and dying, his being in a state of bondage is entirely compatible with the fulfilment of his end. Indeed, this loss of freedom constitutes a further dimension of the very fulfilment of this end, for simply existing in a state of bondage, simply existing in a state in which one is no longer in control of one's passions and desires but is continually 'toss't' by them, as Adam and Eve are in the final books (IX. 1126, X. 718), is in itself sickening.

* * *

The 'Eternal purpose' for fallen man, however, also includes the will that 'Man shall not quite be lost, but sav'd who will' (III. 172–73). Though out of wrath and justice God wills that man suffer and die, that is, he also out of justice and mercy wills that he (at least some humans) be redeemed and saved. By this he means, as he, the Son, and the angels make clear over the course of the poem, that after having achieved their end of misery and death, some will return with the Son to Heaven where, ultimately, God will be all in all (III. 341). God thus wills what Michael calls a 'happy end' for postlapsarian man (XII. 605). Now, because human nature is depraved, it is totally unsuited and incapable to achieve this dimension of its end. That is to say that in relation to this dimension of his end, there is a profound

disjunction between what man by nature is and his end, where his end is defined in terms of what God wills for him. To put it another way, if by a 'natural' end one means that to which a thing is inclined to be or become by virtue of its own internal capacities and instincts, then *part* of man's end (his happy end) is in relation to him unnatural. For the end that is natural to him on this definition is misery and death. In order to achieve the happy end, then, human nature requires the intervention of an agency that is external to itself, beyond its own nature, and that counteracts its own predominant inclinations and dispositions. That agency is God: man will be saved, God asserts in Book III, 'not of will in him, but grace in me / Freely voutsaf't' (III. 174–75). God will uphold man so 'that he may know how frail / His fall'n condition is, and to me owe / All his deliv'rance, and to none but me' (III. 180–82). God says he simply elects some to grace (III. 183–84), and the Son observes that grace 'to all / Comes unprevented, unimplor'd, unsought' (III. 230–31). Immediately after the fall, Adam and Eve are described as praying in the proper manner for the reason that 'from the Mercy-seat above / Prevenient Grace descending had remov'd / The stony from thir hearts, and made new flesh / Regenerate grow instead' (XI. 2–5). As the Son observes, these prayers are 'first fruits' sprung 'From thy implanted Grace in Man' (XI. 22–23), as though Adam and Eve have no say in the matter. Speaking to the Son, he goes on to observe that as in Adam all men perish, 'so in thee / As from a second root shall be restor'd, / As many as are restor'd, without thee none' (III. 287–89). This emphasis on supernatural agency in bringing man to his happy end which is, in relation to what he is, unnatural also features throughout the final books. There we find Michael revealing how history is essentially a matter of 'supernal Grace contending / With sinfulness of men' (XI. 359–60), a matter of the Son saving man 'Not by destroying *Satan*, but his works / In thee [Adam] and in thy Seed' (XII. 394–95). Thus, the end of fallen human nature (i.e. that which God wills for it) is essentially bipartite, and each part is fulfilled in different ways: human nature, simply by virtue of being its own depraved and enslaved self and existing in the corrupt world of nature, suffices to achieve misery, dissolution, and death which are part of its end in this world; God and the Son bring it, in spite of itself, to the happy end, which is the state of blessedness in the afterlife.

If, however, human nature could do nothing on its own before it died except suffer, if it was entirely deprived of the ability to choose and act in accordance with that choice, if his existence in this world was entirely a matter of being the *object* of his passions and appetites, then God could not justly hold him responsible for his existence and make the happy end a *reward* for it. This, however, God clearly intends to do at the 'dread Tribunal' presided over by the Son at the end of time

(III. 326–33, XI. 709–10, XII. 458–65). That is to say that the hard teaching on fallen nature presented by some passages in the poem conflicts with God's will to punish and reward individual humans on the basis of how they live (that some individual humans will have been punished once for this crime will not prevent them from being punished again for not properly taking their punishment). It is partly in order to address this aspect of the theology of the poem that Milton qualifies the vision of fallen human nature as something that can do nothing but till the ground and suffer on its way to dust. He does so in part by suggesting that man is free to accept or to deny the divine grace he needs for salvation. Thus, in his conversation with the Son in Book III, God refers to those who neglect and scorn 'my long sufferance and day of grace' (III. 198) and observes that hellish hate destroys something 'In those who when they may, accept not grace' (III. 300–02). And in Book XII, Michael says that man will be disciplined 'From imposition of strict Laws, to free / Acceptance of large Grace' (XII. 304–05).⁴⁰ Even though man, according to these lines, is free to accept or to scorn God's grace, however, it seems that it is still God who enables him to do so, for he says that he will warn those he has not elected of their 'sinful state' and call them to appease him

while offer'd grace
Invites; for I will clear thir senses dark,
What may suffice, and soft'n stony hearts
To pray, repent, and bring obedience due. (III. 187–90)

Here again we have a 'to' locution: God acts on fallen human nature so that, or with the intention that, it freely pray, repent, and obey. This is confirmed at the conclusion of Book X and the opening of Book XI where we see how God's grace 'had remov'd / The stony' from the hearts of Adam and Eve, 'and made new flesh / Regenerate grow instead' (XI. 3–5). God here seems to say that by softening stony hearts and clearing dark senses, he enables man to pray, repent, and obey, and that these acts appease God and incline him to grant grace to those who perform them. And immediately following the fall, God again makes clear that he is responsible for man's ability to perform these acts when, observing Adam and Eve praying and repenting, he says they are 'My motions in him' (XI. 91).

⁴⁰ For a discussion of how Milton's God's problematic assertion of man's freedom to accept or reject grace aligns him with Arminianism, see Hill, *Milton and the English Revolution*, pp. 268–78; Blair Worden, 'Milton's Republicanism and the Tyranny of Heaven', in *Machiavelli and Republicanism*, ed. by Bock, Skinner, and Viroli, pp. 225–45 (pp. 240–42); Fallon, "Elect above the rest"; Benjamin Myers, 'Prevenient Grace and Conversion in *Paradise Lost*', *Milton Quarterly*, 40 (2006), 20–36.

In addition, in the final book, Michael informs Adam of how he shall be delivered from the Law, which serves only to 'evince / Thir natural pravity' (XII. 287–88), to a 'better Cov'nant', the covenant of grace (XII. 302). And after the first coming, the Son will send a Comforter to man 'who shall dwell / His Spirit within them' and

the Law of Faith
Working through love, upon their hearts shall write,
To guide them in all truth, and also arm
With spiritual Armor, able to resist
Satan's assaults, and quench his fiery darts,
What Man can do against them [...]. (XII. 486–93)

Commenting on these passages, Grossman observes that 'when the Spirit writes on the heart, man can be released from the self-enthralment incurred by Adam's fall and once again perform his moral part'.⁴¹ This is too strong, since, as the rest of Book XII makes clear, human nature is not restored to its unfallen state by the covenant of grace. But it still appears to be restored to a state in which it has and may exercise some freedoms. Though it is still only as a result of how God and the Son act upon it, fallen human nature, all of these passages suggest, ends up being capable of some degree of voluntary action, of something that would count as 'obedience', of something that could justly be punished or rewarded.

There are further indications that there is a realm of freedom, or that man enjoys some particular freedoms, within the constraints established by man's fallen nature and a justice which man is not free to scorn. In Book IV, for example, after the narrator has referred to the 'Rites / Mysterious of connubial Love' enjoyed by Adam and Eve in paradise (IV. 742–43), he claims it was by this kind of 'wedded Love' that

adulterous lust was driv'n from men
Among the bestial herds to range, by thee
Founded in Reason, Loyal, Just, and Pure,
Relations dear, and all the Charities
Of Father, Son, and Brother first were known. (IV. 750–57)

Beginning with an account of Adam and Eve's rites of love, the narrator jumps forward to the postlapsarian world of familial life, as if the wedded, rational love of paradise continued to exist after the fall to drive out the lust in which Adam and Eve burn immediately after the fall and to ground love between fathers, sons, and brothers. Similarly, in Book XI Michael comments on those who suffer and die of

⁴¹ Grossman, *Authors to Themselves*, pp. 17–18, 64–65.

disease as those who ‘pervert pure Nature’s healthful rules / To loathsome sickness’ (XI. 523–24), as though the realm of fallen nature is pure, and as though even fallen mankind, as part of the natural realm, may be capable of obeying those rules. This point is perhaps confirmed in Book XII when Michael criticizes Nimrod for dispossessing ‘Concord and law of Nature from the Earth’ (XII. 28–29). That human nature may retain some of its prelapsarian freedom and even disposition is further indicated by Michael when he corrects Adam who, in the face of the pleasures enjoyed by the sons of Seth and daughters of Cain, observes, ‘Here Nature seems fulfill’d in all her ends’ (XI. 602): ‘Judge not what is best / By pleasure’, Michael instructs, ‘though to Nature seeming meet, / Created, as thou art, to nobler end / Holy and pure, conformity divine’ (XI. 603–06). It seems that even though pleasure may seem meet to fallen human nature, this nature nevertheless has an essentially religious purpose and therefore fulfills itself by living a life that conforms with the holy and the divine. It seems, that is, that the end of prelapsarian human nature is still in some sense intact. Finally, in his discussion of the loss of inward liberty which supposedly follows from Adam’s original lapse, Michael leaves open the possibility of both inner and outer freedom: if reason is not ‘obscured’ but simply ‘not obey’d’, it would seem that man is free to obey reason; if man ‘*permits* / Within himself unworthy Powers to reign / Over free Reason’ (XII. 90–92), it would seem that he could revoke that permission and thereby regain his inner freedom.

Insofar as the poem asserts that reason is not entirely displaced by passion and appetite as ruler of the will of fallen man, it grants it certain freedoms. God’s will for this fallen human nature that is to a limited extent free as it suffers and dies is that it accept God’s grace when offered; that it repent; that it pray to, appease, and obey him. Even if he is not fully capable of performing these actions well, as long as fallen mankind endeavors to do them ‘with sincere intent’, he will be doing something that pleases God and mollifies his wrath (III. 192). In addition, God wills that fallen man who enjoys limited freedoms respond in a particular way to the suffering and death which he is not free to forego. Though man is not free not to suffer, decay, lose his senses, and die, even if he does receive and choose to accept God’s grace, he is free to suffer, decay, and die in a variety of ways. As we will see in the next chapter, virtue for fallen mankind is to a great extent defined in terms of those qualities which permit man to suffer and die in the proper manner. Exercising the freedoms that remain to him in the proper way, some fallen humans may do as God wills and justly be rewarded with the happy end after their death. Those who do not exercise their limited freedom in this way will not, however, fail to

achieve *their* end. It is just that, in light of their response to their punishment and his grace, God wills that they be punished more by suffering in hell forever.

The poem thus grants fallen mankind some freedoms from some agents to do some things, and Milton at times seems to extend them beyond the bare freedoms to accept God's grace and endure mortality in the proper way. But it is important to recognize that, while granting some freedoms to fallen mankind, he categorically denies them others: man is not free to live forever; he is not free to be or make himself happy; he is not free to become as angels; he is not free to ascend to God through contemplation; he is not free to maintain his youth, strength, and beauty; he is not free to sustain his capacities to taste, touch, smell, hear, and see. Critics such as Lewalski, who like to see the poem teaching us 'to live as free moral agents and as virtuous citizens who value and deserve personal and political liberty',⁴² fail to acknowledge the ways in which the poem insists not only that human nature enters a state of bondage as result of the fall, but also that this bondage is consistent with and indeed part of the fulfilment of its end. Critics such as Richard Strier, who think that the poem, and everything Milton wrote, celebrates human dignity,⁴³ fail to appreciate that according to this poem, truly dignified human beings are not miserable: they find existence to be delightful; they do not die; they are not fixed in one ontological state; they are forever young, strong, and beautiful; and they do not exist in political societies. These critics fail to register the force with which, in light of his vision of what man really could be and in fact once was, Milton *negates* the human claim to dignity and some crucial freedoms.

Defining fallen humanity and its ends in these ways, the poem also explicitly repudiates one of the main ends of human existence as Roman republicans such as Sallust and Cicero understand them. This is clear in the description of Satan as he paces up and down the as yet unpopulated Paradise of Fools, the residence of 'All who have thir reward on Earth, the fruits / Of painful Superstition and blind Zeal, / Naught seeking but the praise of men' (III. 451–53). This overt critique of earthly glory as the end of rational agents, one which has powerful precedents in the Gospels and Augustine,⁴⁴ again surfaces in Book VI where the narrator refrains from itemizing even the names of the heroic angels on earth since, 'contented with

⁴² Lewalski, *Life of John Milton*, p. xiii.

⁴³ Strier, 'Milton against Humility'.

⁴⁴ See Matthew 6. 2, 23. 1–12; John 7. 18, 12. 42–43; Augustine, *Concerning the City of God against the Pagans*, trans. by Henry Bettenson (New York: Penguin, 1972; repr. 1984), pp. 196–215.

thir fame in Heav'n', they 'Seek not the praise of men' (VI. 373–76). In Book XI, Michael openly condemns the way in which, in ancient days,

Man-slaughter, shall be held the highest pitch
Of human Glory, and for Glory done
Of triumph, to be styl'd great Conquerers
Patrons of Mankind, Gods, and Sons of Gods,
Destroyers rightlier call'd and Plagues of men.
Thus Fame shall be achiev'd, renown on Earth,
And what most merits fame in silence hid. (XI. 693–99)

Adam and we then witness the drowning of those who achieved 'Fame in the world' as the ancient Romans did — by 'having spilt much blood, and done much waste / Subduing Nations' (XI. 791–92). While still allowing that some deeds merit fame, and that this kind of fame may be of some value, these passages constitute a powerful and explicit rejection of the view that *gloria* is the most important thing, and that military prowess, such as that celebrated by the epic poets as well as Polybius, Sallust, Livy, Cicero, and Machiavelli, is a legitimate way of achieving it.

However, as much of the recent commentary on the poem, and the final books in particular, has emphasized, the particular ways in which God wills fallen man to exercise whatever freedom remains to him may still include what Aristotle and Cicero would think of as political activity: founding political societies, legislating for them, eloquently addressing magistrates and the people, administering justice. And over the course of the final books, fallen mankind displays some impulse to form various forms of political society. But there are no indications that, simply by virtue of founding states and participating in them, human nature may fulfill itself, or reach its fullest development, or be rewarded in the afterlife. Indeed, the cases of Enoch and Noah suggest that *renouncing* and *abandoning* one's political community may in some cases be the only means of avoiding God's wrath and being saved. The fact, at least, that one renounces one's own political society and life within it does not mean one cannot achieve one's end, as it does for the ancients. More importantly, though that part of man's end in this world which is answerable to his choice may include political activity, the life of the citizen and statesman can hardly be said to be its core. At the core of the life in this world that is open to our freedom is the Christian life, where the Christian life is grounded in the care to serve God and the action one is moved to perform out of that care. Thus even when the Christian life takes the form of founding political societies, instituting justice, and commanding armies — and it may — the value and significance of that life will derive not from the facts that it is political and that the human animal brings itself into a state of perfection through the political life. It will derive from

the facts that it is lived in the service of God and that man is intended by its creator to live in his service. Insofar as the *freedom* of prelapsarian man from desire and supernatural forces survives the fall (and Milton is ambivalent about this), so does his *end*, which is not to contemplate or to hold office in political societies, but to serve God and endure the fallen condition out of the care to please him. Humans are to lead 'lives / Religious', as the Sons of God did before they chose to 'yield up all thir virtue' (XI. 621–23).

The poem's vision of human nature and its proper ends thus differs from that of not only the republicans, but also Milton himself in much of the major prose that is so overtly informed by republican texts. In *Areopagitica* (1644), for example, Milton sees the praise of men as a proper end of human endeavour when he argues against pre-publication censorship on grounds that it would dishearten those who 'were born to study and love learning for itself, not for lucre, or any other end but the service of God and of truth, and perhaps that lasting fame and perpetuity of praise which God and good men have consented shall be the reward of those whose published labors advance the good of mankind'.⁴⁵ That such praise is of great importance and is properly enjoyed not only by good authors but also by those who display military prowess, put tyrants on trial, and put them to death is clear in the two *Defences*. In *A Defence of the People of England* (1651), Milton claims that from his early youth he 'had been fired by those enthusiasms myself which kept on urging me, if not to *do* the best deeds, at least to *praise* them'. He therefore feels worthy of the honour done to him by the highest men in the commonwealth who chose him to 'defend those acts which they had performed with great glory under the leadership of God against envy and slander'. Pursuing his goal of not failing 'this most celebrated cause which is most worthy of being remembered by all ages', Milton proceeds to praise those men who performed the deed that was 'glorious' and 'so outstanding' — the regicide — and shows that Salmasius 'will never have the power to stain the fame and eternal glory of the English'. He draws the work to a grand conclusion by praising the English for accomplishing 'so shining a deed' and for having thereby attained, with his own help, such 'glory' and 'everlasting fame'.⁴⁶ He continues in this vein in the *Second Defence of the English People* (1654). His nation shall 'deserve the everlasting praise of all the ages as a country where liberators flourish', and individuals, such as John Bradshaw (who presided over the trial of Charles I), will 'for ever prolong among all mankind, in all countries and in all

⁴⁵ *Areopagitica*, p. 735.

⁴⁶ *A Defence of the People of England*, pp. 51–53, 70, 75, 252–53.

ages, the glory of the noble deeds accomplished in our state'. In the panegyric on Cromwell — one which has much in common with Cicero's panegyric on Caesar in *For Marcellus* — Milton claims that by his deeds, the Protector has 'outstripped not only the achievements of our kings, but even the legends of our heroes'. Having celebrated his countrymen by addressing all nations in a self-consciously Ciceronian oratorical mode, Milton claims that the recent events have been 'made splendidly manifest to the supreme glory of my countrymen and as an example to posterity'. He has indeed 'erected a monument that will not soon pass away, to those deeds that were illustrious, that were glorious, that were almost beyond any praise'.⁴⁷ Such monuments, and the orators and historians who construct them, appear to be of little consequence to fallen human existence as it is envisioned in *Paradise Lost*. And while the poem itself may be a monument to John Milton, it is hardly a monument to the accomplishments of Englishmen. It could not be, given that the Restoration in Milton's eyes confirmed the fear he expresses in the *Second Defence*: that the noble deeds of the 1640s and 1650s amounted merely to 'foundations' which, however 'solidly laid', remained merely foundations upon which the English failed to build an enduring 'work'.⁴⁸

In the major prose, Milton also takes seriously Aristotelian ideas about the end of human existence and attempts to integrate them with his Protestant world-view, in part by way of *downplaying* aspects of that world-view. In *Areopagitica*, the second coming and the salvation of the soul are the least of his concerns. One result of this stance is that the life of virtue in this world comes across as being not a means to the happy end, but a mode of existence that is of value in and of itself. This life of virtue will, as Aristotle claims, consist in the exercise of 'the gift of reason' with which God entrusts man 'to be his own chooser'. But Milton is here most emphatic that the life of virtue will also be pursued within 'a happy nation'. A happy nation is (at least for Englishmen) 'a nation of prophets, of sages, and worthies' who seek truth, cultivate virtue, and worship God in accordance with his revelation of himself 'to his Englishmen'.⁴⁹

Milton continues to affirm the life of virtue — where this is the happy life that can only be achieved within a political society or 'nation' — in the regicide tracts. In the first *Defence*, for example, he claims that those who live under tyranny, 'cannot be considered as citizens or freeborn or free men; nor can be judged to have

⁴⁷ *Second Defence of the English People*, pp. 552, 639, 672, 685.

⁴⁸ *Second Defence of the English People*, p. 685.

⁴⁹ *Areopagitica*, pp. 727, 742–43.

any commonwealth'.⁵⁰ The problem with not having a commonwealth emerges most clearly in light of the definition of the commonwealth Milton provides in *Eikonoklastes* (1649):

every Common-wealth is in general defin'd, a societie sufficient of it self, in all things conducible to well being and commodious life. Any of which requisit things if it cannot have without the gift and favour of a single person, or without leave of his privat reason, or his conscience, it cannot be thought sufficient of it self, and by consequence no Common-wealth, nor free; but a multitude of Vassalls in the Possession and domaine of one absolute Lord.⁵¹

Skinner cites this passage as evidence of Milton's neo-Roman theory of civil liberty,⁵² but, as the editors of the text note, the source here is not Roman, but Greek: 'Milton expects recognition of Aristotle's theory of the natural origin of the city-state (*polis*) or commonwealth (*Politics*, I, I, 8) as an evolution of smaller primitive communities developing toward and finally achieving complete self-sufficiency'.⁵³ As we have seen, in translations of Aristotle, another name for this state of self-sufficiency enjoyed by humans in thriving political societies is 'happiness', and on many occasions in the regicide tracts, happiness in this world again appears to be as important as happiness in the afterlife. Thus, in the second *Defence*, Milton writes that 'he alone is to be called great who either performs or teaches or worthily records great things. Moreover, those things alone are great which either render this life of ours happy (or at least comfortable and pleasant, without dishonour) or lead us to the other, happier life'.⁵⁴ Here it seems as though pursuing happiness in this life vies for importance with seeking happiness in the world to come. Taking a rather more caustic tone in *Eikonoklastes*, he writes,

It were a Nation miserable indeed, not worth the name of a Nation, but a race of Idiots, whose happiness and welfare depended upon one Man. The happiness of a Nation consists in true Religion, Piety, Justice, Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude, and the contempt of Avarice and Ambition. They in whomsoever these vertues dwell eminently, need not Kings to make them happy, but are the architects of thir own happiness.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ *A Defence of the People of England*, p. 194.

⁵¹ *Eikonoklastes*, p. 458.

⁵² Quentin Skinner, 'John Milton and the Politics of Slavery', in *Milton and the Terms of Liberty*, ed. by Graham Parry and Joad Raymond (Cambridge: Brewer, 2002), pp. 1–22 (p. 15).

⁵³ *Eikonoklastes*, p. 458.

⁵⁴ *Second Defence of the English People*, p. 601.

⁵⁵ *Eikonoklastes*, p. 542.

Happiness as something that not just individuals but political societies can know; the happy political society as being self-sufficient; the happiness of both individuals and political societies as an end of human life; happiness as that which individuals can achieve only within political societies; happiness as the life of virtue; happiness as a state that humans can achieve on their own; happiness as something that rulers of political societies can prevent their subjects from achieving — these are all elements of a classically informed vision of the ends of human existence, one which Milton for the most part abandons in his representation of fallen mankind in *Paradise Lost*.

VIRTUE

For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.

1 Corinthians 3. 19

Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?

Luke 12. 14

Republican Tradition

J. G. A. Pocock understands republican tradition to a great extent in terms of a particular understanding of and commitment to virtue, for he takes the republicans to be saying that what they call ‘virtue’ is essential to the life of citizenship which constitutes the proper end for the animal that is by nature political.¹ While highlighting a particular concept of civil liberty in republican tradition, Quentin Skinner, too, asserts that a particular understanding of virtue and its importance to the maintenance of that liberty is also a major component of republican political thought.² Several philosophers and historians of political thought have gone further and argued that a particular moral philosophy is really *the* defining element of republican tradition. The implication is that republicanism is in fact not so much a component of western political thought as a component of western ethical thought. Thus, in his history of western moral philosophy, Alasdair MacIntyre defines republican tradition in terms of a conception of the chief good and a particular understanding of virtue:

Machiavelli with his exaltation of civic virtue over both the Christian and the pagan virtues articulates one aspect of the republican tradition, but only one. What is central to that

¹ Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*.

² Skinner, *Renaissance Virtues*.

tradition is the notion of a public good which is prior to and characterizable independently of the summing of individual desires and interests. Virtue in the individual is nothing more or less than allowing the public good to provide the standard for individual behavior. The virtues are those dispositions which uphold that overriding allegiance.³

Jonathan Scott, too, asserts that classical republicanism has ‘a moral core’, and that that core is the moral philosophy of rational self-government espoused by Plato and Aristotle.⁴ And, indeed, this understanding of republicanism as a tradition that is grounded in a brand of ethical thought is encouraged by Aristotle: it is only after having presented his views on ‘the virtues, and also friendship and pleasure’ in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1179a33) that he proceeds to consider the kinds of legislation and constitution required to make men good which he takes to be the proper subject of the *Politics*. In order to describe republican political thought and determine how Milton stands in relation to it, we must thus consider how the republicans think about virtue, how they view the preconditions for the virtuous life, how they interpret its significance and value, and how they understand the effective means by which it is instilled and maintained in humans.

* * *

In Book II of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle writes that

every virtue or excellence both brings into good condition the things of which it is the excellence and makes the work of that thing be done well; e.g. the excellence of the eye makes both the eye and its work good; for it is by the excellence of the eye that we see well. Similarly the excellence of the horse makes a horse both good in itself and good at running and at carrying its rider and at awaiting the attack of the enemy. Therefore, if this is true in every case, the virtue of man also will be the state of character which makes a man good and which makes him do his own work well. (*NE* 1106a15–23)

This passage indicates, first, that Aristotle uses the term *aretē*, usually translated as ‘virtue’ or ‘excellence’, to refer to a quality or characteristic of a thing, the thing’s exercise of which is necessary and sufficient to that thing’s good performance of the ‘function’ or ‘work’ (*ergon*) which is proper to it. ‘Any action is well performed’, he asserts as a premise of the famous function argument in Book I of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, ‘when it is performed in accordance with the appropriate excellence’

³ Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 2nd edn (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1984; repr. 2002), pp. 236–37.

⁴ Scott, ‘Classical Republicanism in Seventeenth-Century England and the Netherlands’, p. 66. See also Scott, *England’s Troubles* and *Commonwealth Principles*. For other accounts which emphasize the importance of concepts of virtue in republican tradition, including English variations upon it, see Worden, ‘English Republicanism’, and Iseult Honohan, *Civic Republicanism* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 15–41.

(1098a15–16). Secondly, the passage indicates that what counts as a virtue for any thing depends upon the function or work that is proper to that thing: ‘the virtue of a thing’, Aristotle later asserts, ‘is relative to its proper work’ (NE 1139a16). Thirdly, it shows that the fact that any thing is virtuous or has a virtue, in Aristotle’s sense, does not necessarily mean it is in any sense morally good, where moral goodness involves qualities such as justice and courage. It only means that it possesses the qualities or traits the exercise of which is necessary and sufficient to that thing’s accomplishment of the work that is proper to it. Fourthly, it shows that Aristotle thinks that when a part of a thing has a virtue and does its work well, that thing itself may also be said to perform well: given that the virtuous eye performs its work well, *we* (i.e. those of whom such an eye is a part) see well. Finally, this passage indicates that Aristotle’s general concept of virtue implies that anything that has a function that is proper to it may be a virtuous thing. Though in his ethical and political writings Aristotle is mainly interested in human virtue, what he calls ‘virtue’ and ‘excellence’ in its broadest sense is not limited to humans.

As we observed in the last chapter, Aristotle understands the function of man to be ‘a certain kind of life, and this to be an activity or actions of soul implying a rational principle, and the function of a good man to be the good and noble performance of these’ (NE 1097b22–1098a18). The virtues of man, it follows, are those qualities which enable him to perform well the actions of soul implying a rational principle and the exercise of which brings him into what for him is ‘good condition’. We have also seen that Aristotle’s identification of these virtues moves directly out of his more detailed account of human nature as being composed of a body and a soul, where the latter is made up of four parts, each of which has its own specific actions or work to perform. The virtues of the appetitive part of the soul — those qualities which permit it to aim at and achieve the intermediate in passion and action — are the moral virtues. For the purposes of understanding the difference between Milton’s heterodox Protestant moral thought and the moral thought of Aristotle and other ancients, it is important to note that Aristotle grants special importance to one of these moral virtues — justice (*dikaiosunē*).

Justice understood as simply one particular virtue that is distinct from the other moral virtues — what Aristotle calls ‘particular justice’ — is a state of character that is ‘manifested’ in two main ways: by distributing in a particular way goods, such as honours, money, and safety, not to anyone but to ‘those who have a share in the constitution’ (NE 1130b31–33), and by rectifying or correcting in a particular way an inequality or injury which has resulted from transactions between citizens. The man who, in accordance with particular justice, *distributes* goods takes into account the fact that ‘what is just in distribution must be according to merit

[of the parties involved] in some sense' (NE 1131a25–27). For Aristotle, this means that 'the just [in distribution] is a species of the proportionate [. . .]. For proportion is equality of ratios, and involves four terms at least' (NE 1131a30–33). Thus, a distribution of one thing (C) to one citizen (A) and another thing (D) to another citizen (B) will be just if the ratio between the values of things C and D is the same as the ratio between the merit of recipients A and B. The man who, in accordance with particular justice, *rectifies* transactions that have resulted in an inequality, on the other hand, is not concerned with the merit of the citizens involved in the transaction. He 'treats the parties as equal' and, focusing solely on the nature and the extent of the inequality, 'restores equality' by taking away the amount by which one party has gained by the transaction and giving it to the party that has lost by that transaction. This kind of particular justice, Aristotle says, 'will be the intermediate between loss and gain' (NE 1132a19). Since Aristotle contrasts particular justice not with two different forms of excess but only with injustice, and since he sees 'just action' as being 'intermediate between acting unjustly and being unjustly treated' (NE 1133b32), there are difficulties, as many commentators have pointed out, in seeing how Aristotle's idea of justice conforms with his theory of virtue as a mean. But Aristotle concedes that justice is not a mean 'in the same way as the other virtues' are (NE 1133b34–35). And because he says that the motive of particular injustice is 'the pleasure that arises from gain' (NE 1130b4), he at times suggests that the passion which the virtue of particular justice allows us to feel properly is the passion of acquisitiveness, one excessive form of which is greed (*pleonexia*) and the other a diminished passion to acquire goods.⁵

This account of justice as one particular moral virtue among many others indicates that Aristotle thinks of it as a characteristic not of any human being but only of those human beings who are members of political societies — of *citizens*. As Charles Young puts it, 'Aristotelian particular justice invites us, in conducting our relations with others, to assume a perspective from which we view ourselves and [. . .] others as members of a community of free and equal human beings, and to decide what to do from that perspective'.⁶ One of the reasons that particular justice is so important and, unlike the other particular virtues, commands an entire book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, is that it is fundamental to the very existence of the

⁵ For discussions of the problem, see J. O. Urmson, 'Aristotle's Doctrine of the Mean', in *Essays on Aristotle's 'Ethics'*, ed. by Amelie Okesenberg Rorty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), pp. 157–70; Charles Young, 'Aristotle's Justice', in *The Blackwell Guide to Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. by Richard Kraut (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 179–97.

⁶ Young, 'Aristotle's Justice', p. 196.

political society. 'Justice', Aristotle observes in the *Politics*, 'is the bond of men in states, for the administration of justice, which is the determination of what is just, is the principle of order in political society' (1253a35). But the pre-eminence of justice in Aristotle's discussion of moral virtue also derives from the fact that there is another kind of justice which comprehends all of the other moral virtues. Aristotle makes this clear at the opening of Book V where, before explaining particular justice, he lays it down that 'the just [. . .] is the lawful and the fair, the unjust the unlawful and the unfair' (NE 1129a34–35). On Aristotle's view, the laws of authentic political societies are aimed at achieving the happiness of the entire society, where that happiness is understood as the life of virtue. 'The law', he observes, 'bids us do both the acts of a brave man [. . .], and those of a temperate man [. . .] and those of a good-tempered man [. . .], and similarly with regard to the other virtues and forms of wickedness, commanding some acts and forbidding others' (NE 1129b20–24). In short, 'the law [in authentic political societies] bids us practice every virtue and forbids us to practice any vice' (NE 1130b22–25). Obeying the law thus amounts to practicing every virtue and avoiding all vice. Since justice in the broad sense is that characteristic which disposes us to obey the law, justice comprehends all of the other virtues, including particular justice — it 'is complete virtue' and 'virtue entire' (NE 1129b25, 1130a10). And, as Kraut puts it, it is the 'conception of how people are tied together by means of rules, and how their well-being is best advanced by means of laws and norms, that lies behind Aristotle's assumption that justice is a super-virtue'.⁷

Apart from the moral virtues, among which justice is pre-eminent, are the five intellectual virtues, those qualities which enable the two parts of rational principle to perform their work. The virtues of the calculative, practical part of rational principle — those qualities which permit it to deliberate and do other things proper to it well — are art and practical wisdom (*phronēsis*). The virtues of the scientific part of rational principle — those qualities which permit it to contemplate and do other things proper to it well — are intuition, philosophical wisdom, and knowledge. Insofar as each part of human nature has and exercises its virtues, it will perform its function well and bring itself into good condition. And insofar as each part of a human being performs its function well, the person of which that part is a part will perform its function well: the man whose scientific reason operates well contemplates well, and the man whose appetitive part comes to aim at and achieve the mean in passion and action will, or at least is qualified to, live the life of moral virtue well.

⁷ Richard Kraut, *Aristotle: Political Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 125.

Aristotle emphasizes throughout the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics* that the virtuous life which is happiness consists not in simply having the virtues but in exercising them. And he holds that, in order to exercise virtue, humans need to be members of a community of others who are also living the life of virtue (but where what counts as virtue for each member of the society will depend upon the particular constitution of the political society): 'the just man needs people towards whom and with whom he shall act justly, and the temperate man, the brave man, and each of the others is in the same case' (*NE* 1177a29–35; see also *NE* 1178a10–13). Acting justly, temperately, bravely, that is, is not strictly speaking something one can do alone; it is something one does *with* other members of one's political society. A precondition for living the life of moral virtue is thus existence within a political society, where a political society is not just 'a mere aggregate of persons' (*P* 1280b6–9) or 'a mere alliance' (*P* 1328b16), but a group of people who are living together in friendship with the aim of the good life. This is not to say that Aristotle claims that the fact that one citizen is, for example, cowardly necessarily prevents others citizens from being courageous. But it is to say that he holds that there is a basic sense in which it is impossible for any individual to live the life of virtue to the full without being a member of a society within which at least some others are also living it. In Book VII of the *Politics*, Aristotle sums up his understanding of how morally virtuous individuals are *interdependent* with the following observation: 'in the virtue of each, the virtue of all is involved' (1332a38).⁸

The existence of such a political society depends on its having food, craftsmen that can produce tools, arms and men that can use them, revenues for internal needs and war, a care of religion, and a power of deciding what is for the common interest (*P* 1328b6–14). For our purposes, it is important to notice here that religion is listed among those things which are seen to be important because they are preconditions of a healthy political society. In addition, the man of virtue must not engage in many of those activities which are required to produce and get some of these 'necessaries' but must have them provided to him by others. This is because engaging in such productive activities not only deprives one of the leisure that is necessary for the exercise of virtue, but also diminishes one's very capacity for it. This community must thus also contain a class of farmers, traders, mechanics, and

⁸ For further commentary which highlights this aspect of Aristotelian moral virtue, see Harry Jaffa, *Thomism and Aristotelianism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), pp. 31–32; Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, pp. 66–76; MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, pp. 131–64; Honohan, *Civic Republicanism*, pp. 1–29; Terence Irwin, *Aristotle's First Principles* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 407–23.

slaves who provide those goods which are necessary for the leisure which the citizens require in order to exercise their virtues. The individual committed to living the life of moral virtue also needs to exist within a community in which there is a class of courageous soldiers who are capable of defending the community from foreign aggression aimed at reducing them to slaves — the exercise of at least some of the moral virtues depends on leisure, and as the proverb says, ‘there is no leisure for slaves’ (*NE* 1334a21). Finally, since one of the moral virtues is liberality, and since the exercise of this virtue involves the use of ‘riches’ or ‘wealth’, a person will require some quantity of wealth in order to live the life of moral virtue to the full (*NE* 1119b20–1120a22).

Much of this holds even for the man of contemplation, the man who is committed to exercising the virtues of his scientific reason: intuition, philosophical wisdom, and knowledge. For were he existing in a community that was subjected to foreign conquest, he would become a slave and be deprived of the leisure he needs to contemplate. And were he existing in a community in which others did not produce the necessities of life such as food, he would either starve or have to do the work required to acquire food himself. But the man committed to the virtues of the contemplative life needs to exist within a political society for other reasons as well, for Aristotle gives some indications that the life of contemplation will include to some extent the life of moral virtue which requires the political society. In his discussion of friendship in Book IX of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, for example, he observes that it would be strange ‘to make the supremely happy man a solitary; for no one would choose the whole world on condition of being alone, since man is a political creature and one whose nature is to live with others’. Indeed, ‘the supremely happy man will need [virtuous] friends [...] since his purpose is to contemplate worthy actions and actions that are his own, and the actions of a good man who is his friend have both these qualities’ (*NE* 1169b18–1170a4). Aristotle returns to this idea in Book X where he claims that even though the man of contemplation ‘is the most self-sufficient’, he is not entirely so; given his composite nature, the life of pure contemplation is ‘too high for man’ (*NE* 1177b1, 26). Both statesman and philosopher also need ‘external equipment’ and ‘external prosperity’, by which he means a certain amount of private money, power, property, and opportunity to indulge oneself. Even though, strictly speaking, ‘the man who is contemplating the truth needs no such thing’, and even though such things may even be hindrances to his happiness, yet ‘in so far as he is a man and lives with a number of people, he chooses to do virtuous acts; he will therefore need such aids to living a human life’ (*NE* 1178b5–8; see also *P* 1323a21–1324a4).

For Aristotle, the importance or value an individual's living the life of virtue has to that individual derives neither from his experiencing bliss and avoiding pain in the afterlife, about which Aristotle says nothing in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics*, nor from the joys of pleasing his creator and receiving praise from the creator for doing so, about which Aristotle also says very little in these works. It derives from the fact that such a life, and only such a life, is its *telos*, where a *telos* is understood in terms of the fulfilment of innate instincts and the full development of nature. The importance of this life to that individual also derives from the fact that it is happiness, where happiness is 'that which is always desirable in itself and never for the sake of something else' (*NE* 1097a35–36). Finally, the life of virtue is of value to the human who lives it because it brings that human into what, for it, is 'good condition', indeed, 'perfection'. However, an individual's living the life of virtue clearly has value and importance to more than that individual (at least where that individual is a member of a political society). An individual's living the life of virtue is of value and importance to all other members of that individual's political community, since their happiness depends to a significant extent upon that individual's living the life of virtue. This proposition, in conjunction with the proposition that for a political society to be happy all of its citizens must be happy (*P* 1264b17–19, 1329a22–26), means that the happiness of an individual's political society is always to some degree at stake whenever the virtue of that individual is at stake. And that happiness of the entire society is even more important than the happiness of the individual, 'for even if the end is the same for a single man and for a state, that of the state seems at all events something greater and more complete whether to attain or to preserve; though it is worth while to attain the end merely for one man, it is finer and more godlike to attain it for a nation or for city-states' (*NE* 1094b8–11; see also *P* 1252a1–6). An individual's living the life of virtue is valuable to his political society because it contributes to the happiness of that society at large, a happiness which is higher and more complete than his own personal happiness.

One further major dimension of Aristotle's discussion of human virtue within his presentation of 'political science' in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics* is his account of how humans acquire virtues and vices, the means that people may reasonably implement to instill virtue in others, and those who are entitled to employ them. The intellectual virtues are instilled by way of instruction (*NE* 1103a14–16). The moral virtues arise in a more complicated manner. Because the moral character of a person is to a great extent determined by what that person does, especially when that person is young, moral virtue is essentially a product of those things that control and determine what people do, especially what they do *repeatedly*. Given the Aristotelian notion of virtues and vices as states of character

(*hexeis*) which are produced by the repeated performance of actions of a particular kind (i.e. a habit), virtue and vice are the result of those things that enter into the formation of habits. Aristotle gives some indications that this moral virtue may arise in individuals as a result of their existing in particular groups, such as families (*P* 1337a19–27), and under particular conditions, such as war (*P* 1334a26–28). And in Book III of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, he discusses in some detail the ways in which individuals themselves form their own ethical identity and are therefore at least partly responsible for it and rightly praised or blamed for being the kind of person they are.

Aristotle also seems to think, however, that, if left to themselves, people living in political societies will generally not tend to become virtuous, not, at least, virtuous in a way that is appropriate to the kind of political society within which they exist: as he says in Book VII of the *Politics*, ‘virtue and goodness in the state are not a matter of chance but the result of knowledge and purpose’ (1332a30–33). Nor does he think, as Cicero does, that virtue in individuals may be brought about effectively by persuasion and argument. While ‘arguments’ may suffice to do this in connection with ‘the generous-minded among our youth’ and one who is ‘gently born, and a true lover of what is noble, ready to be possessed by virtue, they are not able to encourage the many to nobility and goodness’ (*NE* 1179b4–11). The many will not, that is, be *persuaded* to perform repeatedly those actions which over time will form moral virtue within them (which is one of the main reasons the *Rhetoric* has such a low profile in Aristotle’s political science).

In order to make the many morally good, rulers, Aristotle emphasizes throughout the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics*, must create laws which forbid actions which produce vice and encourage or even coerce actions which produce virtue, laws which are backed by the threat of punishment for those who break them: the many ‘do not by nature obey the sense of shame, but only fear, and do not abstain from bad acts because of their baseness but through fear of punishment’ (*NE* 1179b11–13; also 1180a3–4).⁹ The ‘nurture and occupations’ of the young, then, ‘should be fixed by law; for they will not be painful when they have become customary’ (*NE* 1179b35–36). That Aristotle here means not just behavior but education is made clear at the opening of Book VII of the *Politics*, where he writes

⁹ For commentary which observes Aristotle’s understanding of legislation as the principal activity of the statesman, see Malcolm Schofield, ‘Aristotle’s Political Ethics’, in *Blackwell Guide to Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. by Kraut, pp. 305–22; David Keyt, ‘Aristotle’s Political Philosophy’, in *A Companion to Ancient Philosophy*, ed. by Mary Louise Gill and Pierre Pellegrin (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp. 393–412.

that ‘the legislator should direct his attention above all to the education of youth; for the neglect of education does harm to the constitution’ (1337a1–3), and then lays out in some detail the state-run educational regime to which all who are to be citizens will be subject. These laws extend to the education of adults as well: the political science upon which the legislator draws ‘ordains which of the sciences should be studied in a state, and which each class of citizens should learn and up to what point they should learn them’ (NE 1094a30–1094b2).

These remarks make clear that Aristotle also feels that the rulers of a political society are both *entitled* and *obliged* to use the effective means of instilling virtue. This is because he sees instilling virtue as part of the duty they have by virtue of their positions within the political society. It is part of their duty because all true rulers of states — be they the one, the many, the few, the virtuous, the wealthy, or the poor — rule in the common interest of the citizens, where ruling in the common interest is essentially exercising legislative power with the aim of promoting the happiness of all citizens of the political society. No political society can be happy unless its citizens are virtuous, for happiness is the exercise of virtue. In the name of the happiness of the political society (which is the happiness of all citizens), then, the rulers are entitled and obliged to pursue the aim of making the citizens virtuous: ‘those who care for good government’, he writes in the *Politics*, ‘take into consideration virtue and vice in states. Whence it may be further inferred that virtue must be the care of a state which is truly so called, and not merely enjoys the name’ (P 1280b6–9; NE 1094b1–10, 1102a5–10). Given that this is the job of rulers of political societies, rulers properly legislate, for law is the effective means of doing this job: ‘legislators make the citizens good by forming habits in them, and this is the wish of every legislator, and those who do not effect it miss their mark’ (NE 1103b3–6).

* * *

Cicero adopts the basic Aristotelian understanding of the virtues as those qualities which humans require in order to achieve the end that is determined by what they are by nature. As he puts it at the opening of *On Laws*, ‘moral virtue is nothing other than the completing and perfection of nature’ (I. 25). And like Aristotle, Cicero thinks of human nature in terms of an animal that is superior to all other animals because it is endowed by nature with reason and has deep-seated and innate instincts to form political societies and serve justice within them. Cicero differs from Aristotle, however, by incorporating a theory of natural law into his account of the nature in relation to which this virtue is defined. Though he sometimes defines natural law in terms of the will of supernatural agents such as Jupiter, he more commonly describes it in terms of the dictates of the faculty of

reason which only humans and gods have. Combining Stoic and Aristotelian conceptions of man in this way, Cicero defines virtue in terms of those qualities a human needs in order to make his life conform with natural law, to cultivate and fulfill its own 'innate desire [...] to form communities' (*Rep* I. 39), and to reach what for it is full development and good condition.

Over the course of the rhetorical and philosophical works, Cicero provides several lists of the virtues, and in his treatment of panegyrics in *On the Orator* he approximates the Aristotelian division of the virtues into virtues of character and virtues of intellect (II. 84.343–46). But because he tends to grant priority to the political over the contemplative life — because the 'most important field of practice' of virtue 'is in the government of a state' (*Rep* I. 2) — Cicero generally grants much less importance to the intellectual virtues than Aristotle does. By the time of *On Duties*, his table of virtues includes only one of the intellectual virtues, and even then it is the intellectual virtue that Aristotle links with the virtues of character. For Cicero's wisdom — the virtue that permits us to learn and to perceive truth and falsity — is much closer to Aristotle's practical wisdom or prudence (*phronēsis*) than it is to his theoretical wisdom (*sophia*): in cultivating Ciceronian wisdom, we are to avoid the fault of pursuing what is 'abstruse and difficult, and unnecessary' and are not to be drawn away from 'practical achievements' (*Duties* I. 19). The three other cardinal virtues — sociability (which includes justice and liberality), high spirit (closely associated with courage), and seemliness (closely associated with decorum and moderation) — are all qualities which Cicero views primarily as ones which are required not for contemplation but for honourable participation in social, military, and political life.

Needless to say, Cicero agrees with Aristotle's view that the virtuous life consists not in having the virtues, but in exercising them: 'moral excellence is entirely a matter of practice' (*Rep* I. 2; see also *Duties* I. 19). It is also not surprising that in many of his writings Cicero, like Aristotle, commonly identifies justice as the pre-eminent virtue — it is 'at once the cause and meaning of all the virtues' (*Laws* I. 48), 'the most illustrious of virtues', and 'the mistress and queen of virtues' (*Duties* I. 20, III. 28). This is not surprising because Cicero frequently *defines* the political life to which man is driven by his nature and directed by reason and natural law as life in the service of justice, and in his major political writings he is most emphatic that government and the fellowship between citizens in authentic political societies cannot proceed or exist unless all citizens, but especially those who govern, are just (*Rep* II. 43, 69–70, VI. 13; *Laws* I. 17–35, II. 12–13; *Duties* I. 43, 62–63, II. 71, III. 28). In these three works, Cicero defines justice in terms of that quality out of which one acknowledges and conforms with natural law (and

those civil laws which conform with it). Thus, at the outset of *On Laws*, he writes that ‘the origin of justice must be derived from law. For law is a force of nature, the intelligence and reason of a wise man, and the criterion of justice and injustice’ (I. 19). In these works, Cicero also associates justice with that quality out of which one serves the interests of the political community of which one is a member (*Laws* I. 42–49; *Duties* I. 31). But in *On Duties*, he is more specific when he defines the duties of justice in terms of the imperatives that ‘no man should harm another unless he has been provoked by injustice’ and ‘one should treat common goods as common and private ones as one’s own’ (I. 20). Indeed, as Cicero proceeds to emphasize the importance of securing private property in the rest of this work, he verges on claiming that the principal *rationale* of political societies is not really the life of virtue, but the preservation of private property (see especially *Duties* II. 76–85). Since in late republican Rome the plebeians had very little private property and the patricians had a great deal of it, Cicero’s commitment to justice understood as the virtue out of which one ensures that citizens hold on to their private property really amounts to an endorsement of the ongoing dominance and wealth of the patricians. That endorsement is entirely consistent with his explicit critique of the Gracchi who attempted to take land from those who ‘owned’ it and give it to propertyless soldier-citizens. Cicero’s concept of justice thus displays the aristocratic strain in his ethical and political thought, a strain which we will observe again in his thinking about forms of government and civil liberty.¹⁰

Though Cicero does not identify patriotism as one of the four cardinal virtues, it clearly emerges in his writings as a crucial component of the virtuous citizen, one that in a sense gives a direction to the virtues of wisdom, sociability, high spirit, and seemliness. Thus, in *On the Orator*, Crassus claims that ‘our own native land’ ought to be our greatest joy, and he exclaims ‘with love how ardent must we [Romans] surely be fired for a country such as ours, standing alone among all lands as the home of excellence, imperial power, and good report!’ (I. 196). At the opening of *On the Republic*, Cicero claims that ‘our country’ is not simply a ‘haven for our leisure and a quiet place for our relaxation. No, it reserved the right to appropriate for

¹⁰ For an account which emphasizes the difference between Greek and Roman views on property and justice, and which identifies two distinct strands in republican tradition on the basis of this difference, see Nelson, *Greek Tradition in Republican Thought*, pp. 1–18. My account of Aristotle and the Romans acknowledges some of the differences Nelson observes, but also suggests that the contrast he draws is not as clear-cut as he sometimes suggests. Nelson himself observes that Aristotle’s theory of justice ‘represents something of a midpoint between the Platonic and Roman notions’ (p. 13).

its own purpose the largest and most numerous portions of our loyalty, ability, and sagacity, leaving to us for our private use only what might be surplus to its needs' (I. 8; see also VI. 15–16). In *On Laws* he claims that the country which takes its name from the state as a whole 'should have first place in our affections. That is the country for which we should be willing to die, to which we should devote ourselves heart and soul, and on whose altar we should dedicate and consecrate all that is ours' (*Laws* II. 5). And in *On Duties*, he observes that 'when you have surveyed everything with reason and spirit, of all fellowships none is more serious, and none dearer, than that of each of us with the republic. Parents are dear, and children, relatives and acquaintances are dear, but our country has on its own embraced all the affections of all of us' (I. 57). While Cicero also sometimes identifies piety, or devotion to the gods, as a virtue (*Rep* I. 43; *Laws* II. 19), that devotion is subordinate to the affection for and devotion to our country he so strongly recommends, and it is generally understood by Cicero as merely one of those virtues which qualify us for noble citizenship.

The principal reason patriotism enters into Cicero's table of virtues is that, like Aristotle, he views living within and participating in the life of a political society as a precondition for the life of virtue (even though he at times displays an allegiance to Stoic ideas of the universe as a cosmopolis of which all men and gods are members). Thus, in *On the Republic*, he asks us to 'consider now how wisely provision has been made for that partnership of citizens in a happy and honourable life. For that is the primary purpose of forming a community, and that must be achieved for human beings by the state, partly through its institutions and partly through its laws' (IV. 3). And though, in principle, a person could exercise the cardinal virtues without being a citizen of any political society in particular, Cicero strongly implies and at times explicitly claims that the virtues can only be displayed by way of service to a particular political society. In his discussion of high spirit, for example, he claims that 'those who are equipped by nature to administer affairs must abandon any hesitation over winning office and engage in public life. For only in this way can either the city be ruled or greatness of spirit be displayed' (*Duties* I. 72). We are to love — indeed, sacrifice ourselves to if need be — our political society, in part because that society is the precondition for the life of virtue which is the substance of our fulfilment as human beings.

The value and importance of the virtuous life to the person who lives it derives from the fact that it constitutes what for that individual is the end or purpose of his life and that it is the highest good for man. 'One should strive after justice and every moral virtue for their own sake' (*Laws* I. 48), that is, because the life of virtue is the highest good for and the true end of man. But Cicero also identifies several

benefits or 'rewards' that come with the virtuous life. First of all, in *On the Republic*, Scipio observes that 'for men of good sense the consciousness of their outstanding deeds is in itself the richest reward for their moral excellence' (VI. 8). Secondly, as the great general who defeated Hannibal in the Second Punic War, Scipio Africanus Major, informs his dreaming adoptive grandson, Scipio (who, as a result of destroying Carthage in 146, took on his grandfather's cognomen), 'to make you all the keener to defend the state, Africanus, I want you to know this: for everyone who has saved and served his country and helped it to grow, a sure place is set aside in heaven where he may enjoy a life of eternal bliss' (*Rep* VI. 15). Thirdly, although both Africanus Major and Scipio's father, Paullus, urge Scipio to scorn glory and fame 'that consists merely of people's talk' (*Rep* VI. 20) and that is insignificant compared with eternal bliss in the afterlife, in many of his writings Cicero can hardly conceal his own deep-seated and powerful ambition to sing his own praises and be well remembered by Romans and, indeed, everyone. And in *On Duties*, true glory, that glory that is grounded in great deeds performed in the service of justice, emerges as one of the significant benefits and rewards, if not final ends, of the life of virtue. Finally, because, as Cicero argues in the final book of *On Duties*, only the honourable is truly beneficial and the dishonourable is never beneficial, living the life of virtue is also really the only way to gain and enjoy those things that are beneficial.

The value and importance that an individual's living the virtuous life has for others who live in that individual's political society derives from the fact that it goes to constitute the possibility for their living the life of virtue and fulfilling themselves. For, as we have seen, any individual's ability to live a virtuous life depends upon that individual's living with many others who are virtuous in such a way that they constitute that fellowship of citizens living in justice which Cicero thinks of as an authentic political society. And since retaining and enjoying private property, enjoying other civil liberties, achieving bliss in the afterlife, and achieving glory are also made possible only by the political society, the ability of other people to gain these things, too, is at stake when individuals are deciding to be virtuous or not, especially when those individuals hold office.

Because so much depends on virtue in both rulers and ruled, Cicero, like Plato and Aristotle, is preoccupied in many of his writings with how it is instilled in members of political societies. It is first of all important to observe that Cicero at times speaks as though men are by nature virtuous and have not only an innate desire to form communities, but also natural inclinations to serve justice and the common good within those communities. In addition, men are naturally ashamed of being wicked, for men have a 'sense of shame — that dread, as it were, of justified

rebuke which nature has imparted to man' (*Rep* V. 6; see also *Duties* I. 127–29, 148). There is also natural law which Cicero tends to conceive of not as an inert set of rules but as an active force that commands, deters, and urges people to be virtuous. As Laelius puts it in *On the Republic*, 'law in the proper sense is right reason in harmony with nature. It is spread through the whole human community, unchanging and eternal, calling people to their duty by its commands and deterring them from wrong-doing by its prohibitions' (III. 33; see also *Laws* I. 18). Since all people are endowed by nature with reason, all may, through the proper exercise of that reason, understand this law and achieve the virtue it commands. As Cicero puts it, 'those who have been endowed by nature with reason have also been endowed with right reason, and hence with law, which is right reason in commanding and forbidding; but if with law, then with justice too. But reason has been bestowed on everybody; therefore the same applies to justice' (*Laws* I. 33).

Man's natural disposition to virtue, the commands of natural law, the exercise of the faculty of reason with which nature endows him, and the natural sense of shame, however, are insufficient to preserve and develop virtue in all men. For, as Laelius also observes, when this natural law 'addresses a good man, its commands and prohibitions are never in vain; but those same commands and prohibitions have no effect on the wicked' (*Rep* III. 33). In order to cultivate those qualities which permit humans to serve the republic and so enjoy true fulfilment, Cicero recommends several things, the first of which is preserving the old customs and ways of life — the *mos maiorum* — and bringing up children in accordance with them. As he observes at the opening of *On the Republic*, it is 'from those men who have taken these values, already shaped by teaching, and either established them in custom or confirmed them in law' that devotion, worship, justice, good faith, and fair dealing in Roman life derive (I. 2–3; see also V. 1–2). Here, it should be noted, Cicero displays sympathy with Aristotle's understanding of virtue in terms of habit, for he thinks of this education and training in accordance with the old customs as means of forming good habits and avoiding the formation of those bad habits that constitute vice (*Laws* I. 33; *Duties* I. 59).¹¹ Scipio also indicates here that another major means by which virtue is instilled in the people is the civil law

¹¹ For the ways in which Cicero not only expresses the Aristotelian conception of moral virtue as habit, but also functions as a source of this conception for medieval political thinkers, see Nederman, 'Aristotelian Ethics before the *Nicomachean Ethics*: Alternate Sources of Aristotle's Concept of Virtue in the Twelfth Century', and 'Nature, Ethics, and the Doctrine of *Habitus*: Aristotelian Moral Psychology in the Twelfth Century', in his *Medieval Aristotelianism and its Limits*, pp. 55–75 and pp. 87–109.

and the punishments it threatens to mete out against those who break it (even though, like Aristotle, he sometimes sees virtue as that which is required in order for the law to exist and have any authority). As he says in *On Laws*, speaking of the civil laws he is about to recommend, ‘as the law should correct wickedness and promote goodness, a code of conduct may be derived from it’ (I. 58; Crassus makes the same point in *Or* I. 194). There is also the censor who, appealing to the sense of shame, casts his ‘stigma’ on all ignoble behaviour (*Rep* IV. 6). In *On Laws*, Cicero also emphasizes the importance of the example set by prominent individuals: ‘just as the whole state is apt to be infected by the vicious desires of its leaders’, he observes, ‘so it is healed and set right by their restraint’ (III. 30–34).

In Book II of *On the Republic* and Book III of *On Laws*, Cicero also sees institutionalized state religion as a primary source of virtue in a populace. Indeed, he here sees the value and importance of religion deriving primarily from its being a means of inculcating virtue as he understands it. Perhaps following Polybius on this matter, and surely setting a precedent for Livy and Machiavelli, Scipio praises the second king, Numa, on grounds that he civilized the early bellicose Romans by instituting a state religion and ‘turning their attention to religious ceremonies’. By the time of his death, ‘he had established on a firm basis those two factors which, above all others, ensure that states will last, namely religion and humane behaviour’ (*Rep* II. 26–27). This utilitarian perspective on religion is on display in *On Laws* when, after discussing some basic religious ideas, Cicero asks, ‘Who would deny that these ideas were useful, bearing in mind how many contracts are strengthened by the swearing of oaths, how valuable religious scruples are for guaranteeing treaties, how many people are restrained from crime by the fear of divine retribution, and how sacred a thing a partnership of citizens is when the immortal gods are admitted to that company as judges or witnesses?’ (II. 16). When Cicero proceeds to lay down civil laws governing religious worship, ones which call for a three-tiered priesthood which is to oversee both private and public religious practice in the state and which is empowered to assign punishments, including death, to those who violate its rules and commands, it turns out, as Cicero’s brother Quintus observes, that ‘this set of religious regulations is not very different from the laws of Numa and the customs of our country’. As Cicero explains, this is because the aim of these laws concerning religion is really not to please the gods, but ‘to maintain that superior type of government’ which Scipio described in *On the Republic*, and Numa’s old religious rules were effectual in doing that (*Laws* II. 23).¹²

¹² For a detailed account of Cicero’s views on religion, one which observes how he often regarded and used it as ‘an instrument of persuasion’ (pp. 39, 73), and evaluated it in part on the

As we approach an assessment of how Milton responds in his major prose and *Paradise Lost* to ancient republican thinking about virtue, we also need to observe that, even on the view that humans naturally form political communities and serve justice within them — the view that prevails in the philosophical works — Cicero, unlike Aristotle, grants enormous importance to the orator in relation to the production of moral virtue. In describing the ideal orator, for example, Crassus claims to describe one who ‘can by his eloquence expose to the indignation of fellow-citizens, and restrain by punishment, the crimes and iniquities of the guilty; who also, by the shield of his talent, can deliver innocence from legal penalties; who again can either inspire a lukewarm and erring nation to a sense of the fitting, or lead them away from their blundering, or kindle their wrath against the wicked, or soothe them when they are excited against good men’ (*Or* I. 202). Later in this dialogue, Antonius takes issue with Crassus’s identification of civil law as a principal cause of virtue and allies himself with this statement on the power of eloquence in this regard (*Or* I. 247). He then observes that ‘by one and the same power of eloquence the deceitful among mankind are brought to destruction, and the righteous to deliverance. Who more passionately than the orator can encourage to virtuous conduct, or more zealously than he reclaim from vicious courses?’ (*Or* II. 35). It is, moreover, in part as a result of the orator’s efforts as both historian and author of panegyrics that the people become aware of great men and are inspired to imitate their virtuous conduct (*Or* II. 36, 341–49).

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Like Aristotle and Cicero, Sallust thinks of virtue basically in terms of those characteristics which enable man to lead the life that is in accordance with his particular nature and the natural order at large, a life which he defines in terms of the rule of the superior part of human nature over the inferior part. Those men who are ‘noble’ and ‘virtuous’ in Sallust’s writing are thus those in whom mind or intellect rules over body, passion, desire, and appetite. More specifically, these men control the desire for power, the desire for money and property, the desire for food, the desire for sleep and ease, the love of self, sexual desire, the desire to inflict pain, and fear. Avoiding the vices of excessive ambition, avarice, injustice, gluttony, sloth, insolence, arrogance, selfishness, lust, cruelty, and cowardice, that is, they are men of honesty, loyalty, proper ambition, liberality, justice, temperance, industry, modesty, patriotism, and courage. Like Aristotle and Cicero, Sallust and many of his favored characters such as Caesar, Cato, Memmius, and Marius emphasize the

basis of its utility to the state, see R. J. Goar, *Cicero and the State Religion* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1972).

importance of justice and the extraordinarily pernicious effects of injustice (*Cat* 2.5, 9.1–4, 41.1–5, 52.21; *Jug* 15.1–3, 16.1–2, 30.2–3, 31.1–29).¹³ However, Sallust's famous analysis of corruption in the late republic in terms of sloth, luxury, greed, gluttony, and avarice also powerfully asserts the importance of industry and temperance. As the prefaces and the great speech of Marius in *The War with Jugurtha* indicate, virtuous men are, in addition, men who *act* out of and *exercise* these inner qualities.

The grand statements about mind, body, nature, fortune, and glory with which *The War with Catiline* and *The War with Jugurtha* begin might suggest that as long as mind rules body, the human animal can live the life of virtue — no matter where it is. As Sallust proceeds with his narratives, however, it becomes clear that, like Aristotle and Cicero, he sees membership in a political society as a precondition for the exercise of virtue. For, as we have seen, Sallust makes service to the political society of which one is a member an essential component of the virtuous life, even when one does not hold office of any kind and is not directly involved in the administration of justice. Sallust also implies that one's ability to achieve one of the primary ends of the life of virtue — glory — depends upon one's being a member of a political society: political societies provide not only the very best opportunities to exercise virtue (by holding office and participating in the armed forces) but also historians, such as Sallust, who commemorate the great deeds performed by their fellow-citizens. If you are not a member of a political society which includes historians and rhetoricians, who will celebrate your deeds and establish your glory over the long run? Perhaps Fortune, or the rhetoricians and historians of *other* political societies, but as Sallust himself observes, it is no coincidence that Athenian historians celebrate Athenian heroes (*Cat* 8.1–5).

The value of the virtuous life to the individual who lives it derives from the fact that it is the only means by which that individual may achieve freedom from the forces of fate, circumstance, and fortune. Being free in this sense, the virtuous individual 'controls' his own life and may therefore be successful in his chosen pursuit, for besides 'success in arms' (*Cat* 1.5–6), 'success in agriculture, navigation, and architecture depends invariably upon mental excellence' (*Cat* 1.7–8). This holds for those who wish to maintain the 'sway' (*imperium*) that they have won with their arms: 'if the mental excellence with which kings and rulers are endowed were as potent in peace as in war, human affairs would run an even and steadier course, and you would not see power passing from hand to hand and everything in

¹³ For the importance of Sallust's comments on justice to prehumanist republican theory, see Skinner, 'Rediscovery of Republican Values', pp. 25–27.

turmoil and confusion' (*Cat* 2.3–5). The value of an individual's success to that individual, in turn, derives mainly from the fact that it constitutes 'the highest distinction' (*Jug* 2.4) and so a way of making 'the memory of our lives as long as possible' (*Cat* 1.3–4). The life of virtue, that is, is of value to the person who lives it because it is the primary means for him to achieve that *gloria* which, for a mortal organism of its kind, is at least one of the principal goals of his existence. But the virtuous life also has some value in and of itself for the individual who lives it. This value derives, first, from the fact that it is in accordance with the nature of man and so superior in some essential sense to the life that is proper to the animals, none of which has intellect. It derives, secondly, from the fact that the life of a virtuous political society at large is valuable to all of its members.

Both the individual's life of virtue and the glory that he achieves by living it are valuable to others as well. For though serving the political society by way of engaging in public affairs is not the only way of living virtuously, it is central to it, particularly when that society is in good condition. And even when one retires from public affairs as Sallust did, the virtuous life still consists in serving one's country, as Sallust did when he retired and wrote history. Moreover, the glory that one achieves by way of the virtuous life that issues in success itself inspires others to live virtuously and so to benefit both themselves and other members of the political society.

As Skinner observes, Sallust holds that these virtues upon which civil and other kinds of liberty depend are to be instilled and preserved by the civil law backed by punishment.¹⁴ But it is important to observe that at some points Sallust speaks as though the civil law is really only a hedge against a populace that has already fallen away from virtue, rather than the primary means of instilling it. Speaking of the earliest Romans in the preface to *The War with Catiline*, for example, he claims it was not law but 'harmony' (*concordia*) that changed 'a heterogeneous and roving band into a commonwealth [*civitas*]' (6.2–3). In the early republic, 'good morals were cultivated at home and in the field; there was the greatest harmony and little or no avarice; justice and probity prevailed among them, thanks not so much to laws as to nature' (*Cat* 9.1–2). And laws were, it seems, ineffectual as a means of preserving virtue once corruption began to set in: that 'from time to time' the initially slowly growing vices 'were punished' did not prevent them from becoming a 'disease' that 'spread like a deadly plague' (*Cat* 10.6). The first passage also suggests that Sallust thinks that the effective way of instilling virtue is by 'cultivating' it at home and in the field, and in the rest of the narrative Sallust gives extensive indications of how this cultivation takes place.

¹⁴ Skinner, 'Republican Ideal of Political Liberty'.

Speaking of the early republic, he observes that ‘as soon as the young men could endure the hardships of war, they were taught a soldier’s duties in camp under a vigorous discipline’ (*Cat* 7.4). Sallust emphasizes that this vigorous discipline is one of the most powerful means of instilling what he takes to be virtue in the people (and that lax discipline is the source of corruption). Thus, in *The War with Jugurtha*, he observes how, after being elected consul, Metellus was given command of an army that, under the lax discipline of its commander, the proconsul Spurius Albinus, had become ‘weak, cowardly, and incapable of facing either danger or hardship, readier of tongue than of hand, a plunderer of our allies and itself a prey to the enemy, subject to no discipline or restraint’ (44.1–2). Bearing the responsibility of defeating the redoubtable Jugurtha in Numidia, Metellus decided not to take the field until he had restored his army’s virtue. He did this by forbidding the selling of bread or any cooked food in the camp, forbidding sutlers to attend the army, forbidding soldiers to have slaves or pack animals in camp or on the march, breaking camp every day for marches, fortifying camp, setting guards at short intervals and inspecting them in person with his lieutenants, and inspecting soldiers on marches and making them carry food and arms. In short, he ‘forced the soldiers to undergo the old-time drill and training’. ‘Rather by keeping them from doing wrong than by punishing them’, Sallust observes, ‘he soon restored the temper of his army’ (*Jug* 45.3) and made his men into ‘valiant soldiers’ (*Jug* 52.1–2).

Though enjoying great success with his newly restored army, Metellus was relieved of his command in Numidia; it passed to Marius whose virtue is also regarded by Sallust as the product of the military training he underwent (*Jug* 63.3). In his extraordinary speech to the plebeians, Marius himself confirms this understanding of the origins of his own virtue: ‘I have so lived that I am familiar with every form of hardship and danger [. . .]. For me, who have spent my entire life in exemplary conduct, habit has made right living a second nature’ (*Jug* 85.9–10). He has, that is, become a virtuous man, one for whom virtuous action is habitual, by performing virtuous deeds (all in accordance with Aristotelian virtue theory; see also *Cat* 9, 10, 13.4–5, 16). Marius, moreover, intends to make his soldiers virtuous by setting himself as an example for them to follow (*Jug* 85.34–37). Over the course of the rest of the narrative, it is clear that by these means, but also by appealing to the soldiers’ sense of shame (*Jug* 100.5), Marius was indeed successful in instilling the military virtues in his army which included many new recruits and propertyless commoners. But the new men also learned courage simply by fighting and observing firsthand that bravery in battle is in fact not just the way to survive, but the way to prosper (*Jug* 87.2–3).

Sallust identifies a host of other ways of cultivating virtue in a citizenry besides raising it within disciplined armed forces. He observes Catiline's assertion to his troops that 'necessity [...] makes even the timid brave', and his subsequent act of driving away the horses before the decisive battle 'in order to make the danger equal for all and thus to increase the soldiers' courage'. He observes (in spite of Catiline's disclaimer) how valour is instilled by way of the speeches a commanding officer — be he Catiline, Metellus, Marius, or Jugurtha — delivers to his men. Reproducing the great speeches of Memmius and Marius to the plebeians and describing their effects, Sallust shows how, in Rome, the powers of oratory could be used to arouse proper pride and the demand for justice in the people. And he observes how, by making people *remember* the noble deeds that they and their ancestors had performed, commanders and societies at large may instill the virtues of courage and high spirit (*Jug* 4.5–6; *Cat* 59.5–6). Though Marius vehemently asserts that noble ancestors do not instill virtue in their descendants, he also understands himself to be remembering and emulating 'the men of old' (*Jug* 85.37). Finally, Sallust indicates that people may become virtuous simply by deliberately cultivating virtue within themselves (he thus agrees with Aristotle's view that, at least to some extent, individuals are responsible for the formation of virtues and vices within themselves). Thus, in his portrayal of the heroic characters of Caesar and Cato at the end of *The War with Catiline*, Sallust observes that the former 'had schooled himself to work hard and sleep little, to devote himself to the welfare of his friends and neglect his own, to refuse nothing that was worth the giving', while the latter, apparently on his own initiative, 'cultivated self-control, propriety, but above all austerity' (54.4–6).

* * *

That it is a mistake to segregate the ancient pagan virtues from what Machiavelli means when he uses the term 'virtue' (*virtù*) is clear from the fact that in *The Prince* he concludes his discussion of Agathocles, the notorious tyrant of Syracuse, by observing that his rise to political power was grounded in neither fortune nor virtue but in a 'criminal and nefarious method', and that 'it cannot be called prowess (*virtù*) to kill fellow-citizens, to betray friends, to be treacherous, pitiless, irreligious' (28). It is furthermore clear that when, in the famous chapter on how the prince is to regulate his conduct, Machiavelli counsels him to abandon 'virtues' and practice 'vices' in cases where following the virtues would result in his 'self-destruction', by 'virtues' he means the qualities of generosity, compassion, fidelity, courage, courtesy, chastity, honesty, seriousness, and religiosity which he explicitly identifies (*Pr* 49–50). When, moreover, Machiavelli claims that the prince should wherever possible have 'the good qualities' that give men a reputation for virtue

and that he ‘should not deviate from what is good if that is possible but [...] should know how to do evil, if that is necessary’, he is working on an explicitly asserted definition of virtue in terms of compassion, honesty, kindness, fidelity, and religiosity (*Pr* 57). And one of the reasons Machiavelli presents Cesare Borgia as an exemplar of virtue is that, because he was cruel with the intention and indeed effect of restoring unity, order, and obedience in the Romagna, ‘there was more compassion’ in him than in the Florentine people ‘who, to escape being called cruel, allowed Pistoia to be devastated’ (*Pr* 53).

Throughout his extensive discussion of the virtue of the Roman military in the *Discourses*, Machiavelli again speaks of many of the particular qualities which were thought by the ancients to be those by virtue of which one was a morally good man. Courage, or valour, is perhaps foremost among these, and Machiavelli rarely misses an occasion to praise the Roman soldiers for their display of it and to attribute their success in war to it. He also emphasizes prudence in his discussion of the virtue of the great Roman generals, where prudence is, as Skinner puts it, the quality of mind ‘required for the forming of practical judgments, the careful and effective calculation of chances and outcomes’.¹⁵ And Machiavelli is far from excluding justice, in the basic sense of law-abidingness, from his account of ancient military virtue: in his discussion of the three Fabii and the Roman ‘disregard of justice’ in not punishing them for their violation of the *jus gentium* when they joined the battle against the Gauls, for example, Machiavelli remarks on the importance of justice in the sense of punishing those who break law and inflict injury on others. Having, as a direct result of this injustice, been sacked by the Gauls in 390 BC, Rome was reborn and took on ‘a new vitality and a new virtue’, which is to say that it took up again ‘the observance of religion and justice, both of which had begun to show blemishes’ (*D* 386). The reference to religion here is also significant: Machiavelli is most emphatic that a certain religiosity, a God-fearingness and observance of religious ceremony, was a foundational component of the Roman soldier’s ‘virtue’ (*D* 139–52, 369). Finally, patriotism is part of the virtue displayed by the Roman soldiers: those who desire to be looked upon as good citizens should emulate the example of Fabius who, out of ‘love for his country’, set aside private enmities (*D* 524; see also 278–79).

Courage, prudence, patriotism, kindness, God-fearingness, justice — all are explicitly identified by Machiavelli as qualities of those men who, subject to good education, training, and discipline, became soldiers, commanders, citizens, and

¹⁵ Skinner, ‘Idea of Negative Liberty,’ p. 202.

statesmen of virtue. Speaking of virtue in both *The Prince* and the *Discourses*, Machiavelli thus often has in mind many of the qualities which the ancients regarded as the moral virtues. It is also important to see that in many other important ways, Machiavelli's thinking about virtue follows the more systematic thinking about it in Aristotle and Cicero (some of whose works he could have read in his father Bernardo's home).¹⁶ Skinner observes that in *The Prince*, Machiavelli closely follows Cicero in identifying prudence, temperance, and courage as qualities which citizens of a political society need to have in order for that society to be one within which citizens may enjoy civil liberties.¹⁷ The ways in which Machiavelli follows Cicero here also show that it is mistaken to claim that 'one of the major casualties of Machiavellian *virtù* is moderation (the anchor of the alternative classical and Christian notion of virtue), in desires, assertions, and expectations'.¹⁸ Certainly, as Parel and others point out, Machiavelli recommends extreme forms of action in some circumstances as means of achieving certain ends, and this recommendation is consistent with his observation in the *Discourses* that 'most men prefer to steer a middle course, which is very harmful' (177). But Machiavelli also recommends that when it comes to taking counsel, princes 'should adopt a middle way' (*Pr* 76). In the *Discourses* he criticizes men for not knowing how 'to use moderation where their fortunes are concerned' (181) and regrets that the 'middle path' (*via di mezzo*) is alien to human nature (465). Moreover, as Whitfield forcefully argues, Machiavelli's recommendation of prudence and wisdom in many cases amounts to a recommendation of forms of moderation and compromise.¹⁹ And when he discusses courage and modesty as components of ancient Roman virtue, Machiavelli clearly thinks of them in terms of the ability to feel passion in moderation: his scathing comparison of the Romans with the Venetians in the *Discourses* (488–92) is entirely in keeping with both Aristotle's understanding of the moral virtues as

¹⁶ On the basis of a diary kept by Machiavelli's father Bernardo from 1471 to 1487, Ridolfi observes that among the books which he bought or borrowed were those by Livy, Macrobius, Priscian, Donato Acciaiuoli on Aristotle's *Ethics*, and Biondo's *Deche*. Among those he borrowed were the *Philippics*, *De Officiis*, *De oratore*, Aristotle's *Ethics*, Ptolemy's *Cosmography*, a translation of Pliny, Justin, Biondo's *Italia Illustrata*, and the Bible. See Roberto Ridolfi, *The Life of Niccolò Machiavelli*, trans. by Cecil Grayson (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), pp. 257–58.

¹⁷ Skinner, 'Idea of Negative Liberty', pp. 186–212.

¹⁸ Parel, *Machiavellian Cosmos*, p. 97; see also Mansfield, *Machiavelli's Virtue*, p. 18; Rahe, 'Situating Machiavelli', p. 294.

¹⁹ J. H. Whitfield, 'Machiavelli and the *via di mezzo*', in *Discourses on Machiavelli* (Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons, 1969), pp. 37–55.

those qualities which allow us to feel passion moderately and to aim at what is intermediate in passion and action, and Cicero's discussion of moderation in *On Duties* (especially I. 90).

Nederman observes that, because one of the premises of Machiavelli's discussion of virtuous (and corrupt) action is that it moves out of and is to a great extent determined by 'deeply rooted traits of character', it conforms with Aristotle's understanding of moral action as that which arises 'from fixed states of the mind or qualities of the soul, that is, from moral character'.²⁰ Besides conforming with this basic Aristotelian idea about virtuous action, Machiavelli also conforms with Aristotle's view that virtuous action is chosen and performed voluntarily. For he both explicitly and implicitly denies the propositions that men are *enslaved* by the desires and passions that go to define their 'natures', and that they are therefore incapable of acting in ways other than those dictated by their desires and appetites. Exercising mind (by reading history and reflecting upon it, for example) and freely *choosing* on the basis of this thinking to do one thing rather than another (to train and use one's own troops rather than employ mercenaries, for example) remains central to Machiavelli's idea of virtue. It thus cannot reasonably be said that 'distinctly opposing Aristotle and his tradition', Machiavelli 'abandons choice as the basis of moral virtue'.²¹

We observed in the previous chapter that Machiavelli does not entirely abandon Aristotelian notions of human nature as something that may exist in good or bad condition, something that may perfect itself to varying degrees, something the existence of which may be whole and intact or 'marred'. This is why it is also simplistic to claim that in his writings, 'since politicized virtue is cut loose from individual perfection, virtues in the plural are no longer parts of virtue; they become qualities' which 'have no natural ordering, no hierarchy, which the end of perfection would give them'.²² Because the notions of particular forms of life and society which are perfect for or appropriate to what man is pull some weight with Machiavelli, he does not always dismiss the general concept of a virtue as a quality that permits man to achieve what, for a creature of his nature, is perfect condition, nor does he always rank all human qualities or characteristics equally. Because he has some inclination to see a virtuous republic as a perfect human society, one that

²⁰ Cary Nederman, 'Machiavelli and Moral Character: Principality, Republic and the Psychology of *Virtù*', *History of Political Thought*, 21 (2000), 349–64 (p. 350). For Aristotle on character, see also Nederman, 'Puzzle of the Political Animal'.

²¹ Mansfield, *Machiavelli's Virtue*, p. 16.

²² Mansfield, *Machiavelli's Virtue*, p. 21.

is appropriate to what man is, and prudent, courageous, honest, temperate, just, manly citizens as the kind of citizens that are *in most cases* required for the existence of such a society, he sometimes grants a priority to these qualities while at the same time conceding that, in some situations and for the sake of the survival of that society, they must be abandoned.

Although Machiavelli fiercely criticizes Christianity, much of this criticism is directed towards the institutional forms it took, and, as we saw in Chapter 1, he at times speaks as though he has not entirely abandoned the Christian vision of what man is. There are therefore also some traces of Christian sentiment in his thinking about virtue. Thus, in *The Prince*, he observes that Moses did what God commanded and is to be 'praised for the grace which made him worthy of speaking with God' (18). In the *Discourses*, he counsels that 'it behooves [...] every man to shun' methods which are exceedingly cruel because they 'are repugnant to any community, not only to a Christian one' (177). Machiavelli also praises St Francis and St Dominic for renovating the church and preventing 'the depravity of prelates and of religious heads from bringing ruin on religion' (*D* 389). Though faint, and though they are subordinated to Machiavelli's overriding conception of religion as a basis for civic virtue, there are traces of Christian sentiment in Machiavelli's treatment of virtue in *The Prince* and the *Discourses*.²³

However, as several scholars have observed and as many English translations make clear, Machiavelli also often uses the term *virtù* to refer not so much to any particular moral quality or characteristic in people as to a combination of physical and mental energy, ability, and resourcefulness which permit men to act boldly and achieve their goals, whatever they may be.²⁴ Thus, in his discussion in *The Prince* of those individuals who come to be princes 'by their own abilities [*virtù*] and not by good fortune', he emphasizes the abilities and strengths that allow one to give form to the matter provided by fortune, to stand alone, to seize opportunities, and to 'innovate' especially in the military and political realms. And in his notorious and apparently inconsistent discussion of the ruthless Agathocles, he observes that he committed his crimes with so much 'audacity and physical courage' (*virtù d'animo e di corpo*) that he advanced himself, and that he displayed great 'prowess' (*virtù*) 'in confronting and surviving danger' (*Pr* 27–28). In the *Discourses*, he commonly speaks of how the virtue of builders and founders is displayed in the

²³ See de Grazia, *Machiavelli in Hell*, pp. 30–70.

²⁴ For a list of the scholars who have observed this, see Russell Price, 'The Senses of *Virtù* in Machiavelli', *European Studies Review*, 3 (1973), 315–45. See also Price's notes in his translation of *The Prince*, pp. 103–04; Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, pp. 156–218.

fortune of what is built (102), of how Rome always looked for 'virtue', in the general sense of ability, regardless of age and wealth (260, 475), when it was looking for men to perform particular tasks. And in speaking of Scipio and Hannibal, the first of whom entered Spain in a 'humane and kindly' way while the second entered Italy through 'cruelty, violence, rapine and every sort of perfidy', Machiavelli observes that it matters little how a general behaves, 'provided he has virtuosity, and his virtue gives him standing with men' (D 463). Using 'virtue' in this way, Machiavelli still, however, is not departing from ancient and Renaissance precedent, for as Whitfield, Price, and others have noted, this usage of 'virtue' conforms with usages of *virtus* in the Latin historians, *virtù* in other Renaissance Italian authors, *virtu* in Renaissance French writers, and 'virtue' in Renaissance English writers.²⁵

These important ways in which Machiavelli's usage of 'virtue' conforms with ancient pagan and Christian precedent, however, exist within a broader ethical discourse which in many respects is different from and indeed hostile to that precedent and its premises. That is to say that Aristotelian, Ciceronian, and, to a much lesser extent, Christian and astrological discourses of virtue are what historians of western moral thought such as Alasdair MacIntyre might call 'linguistic survivals' within a broader discourse which is different from and incompatible with them.²⁶ For, as we have seen, Machiavelli displays a strong tendency to speak of man as an animal that has no end or purpose by nature, God, or reason, but only those ends he sets for himself out of the desires and passions which happen to form, or are deliberately produced by educational regimes and himself, within him. Neither reason nor 'mind' may serve to direct him to identify or fulfill any particular end or purpose he has by nature or by God — they can be merely faculties or powers that assist him in achieving the ends he posits for himself out of desire and passion. On this picture of man, there *is* no virtue, in the sense of a quality, characteristic, ability, or disposition which enables humans to fulfill the ends and functions they have by nature, God, reason, or the planets. There are only qualities and dispositions by means of which individuals may fulfill the ends and purposes they set for themselves out of their own desires and passions. This is to deny neither that some humans may have and develop the capacity to feel passion moderately, nor that that capacity may be valuable as a means to achieve their aims, but it is to deny that that capacity is a virtue in the Aristotelian, Ciceronian, or Christian sense.

²⁵ Whitfield, *Discourses on Machiavelli*, p. 97; Price, 'Senses of *Virtù* in Machiavelli', pp. 319–23.

²⁶ See MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 60.

What makes a quality a virtue, Machiavelli often but by no means consistently implies, is its being a quality the possession of which helps a person to achieve whatever it is that person happens to want to achieve. And given this general notion of virtue, all kinds of qualities and characteristics, including those regarded by the ancients and Christians as vices — injustice, cruelty, ambition, pride, dishonesty, violence, intemperance — may qualify as virtues. Thus, Agathocles, to whom Machiavelli would like to deny virtue, is a man of virtue, since he was cruel, inhumane, and treacherous in such a way that he got what he wanted and kept it.

Because Machiavelli is held by different concepts of human nature and different ideas of virtue, his account of the importance of the life of virtue is ambivalent, if not downright inconsistent. Insofar as the ancient understanding of man as the rational, political animal retains a hold on him — and it does so to some extent — he is committed to the ancient view that the importance of the life of virtue lies in the fact that only through it does man fulfill what he is by nature and bring himself and his society into good and in some cases perfect condition. Insofar as Christian sensibility persists in his writing — it is faint — he is committed to the Christian view that the importance of the life of virtue lies in the fact that only through it does man please God and ensure the salvation of his soul in the world to come. But insofar as Machiavelli rejects both ancient pagan and Christian understandings of man and virtue — and he displays powerful inclinations to do so — he is committed to the view that there really is no such thing as ‘the life of virtue’, not at least where that would mean a life that was lived in accordance with any specifiable set of qualities or characteristics. There are only lives of virtue, where *a* life of virtue is a life lived in accordance with those qualities the possession and exercise of which enable one to achieve one’s chosen goals, whatever they may be, and where pretty much any quality can, in relation to one goal or another, count as a virtue. The value and importance of a life of virtue defined in this way lie simply in the fact that it is the means of achieving whatever goals people have set for themselves — virtue is valuable because it is the road to success, where success is defined in terms of getting whatever it is you want.

As Skinner observes, Machiavelli sees civil law as a means of inculcating and maintaining virtue, or at least an effective means of coercing people to engage in virtuous behaviour. Thus, for example, Machiavelli claims that the laws laid down by the early kings kept Rome ‘rich in virtue’ (*D* 104), and he cites approvingly those who say that ‘hunger and poverty make men industrious, and that laws make them good’ (*D* 112). But it is going too far to claim that along with the Roman republicans he places ‘all [his] faith in the coercive powers of the law’ as a means of

making men virtuous and, so, capable of civil liberty.²⁷ For, first of all, we have seen that the Roman republicans do not place all their faith in the coercive powers of the law. In addition, immediately after making the above statement, Machiavelli observes, in Sallustian vein, that ‘there is no need of legislation so long as things work well without it, but, when such good customs break down, legislation forthwith becomes necessary’ (*D* 112), as though good customs and ways of living can do the job in some cases. Indeed, Machiavelli at one point observes that ‘just as for the maintenance of good customs laws are required, so if laws are to be observed, there is need of good customs’ (*D* 160). The efficacy of law, that is, is dependent upon the existence of good custom, which is why Machiavelli sees the Roman custodians of customs — the censors — as being so important (*D* 230, 266). Machiavelli also observes, again after Sallust, that once the Romans started to lose their virtue, the new laws introduced in Rome to keep the populace ‘in order [...] did not suffice to keep men good, though they might have helped had the introduction of new laws been accompanied by a modification of the institutions’ (*D* 161).

Though they may ‘enable magistrates to keep the citizens in order’ (*D* 161), laws thus can neither prevent the decay of virtue in the populace of a republic, nor restore virtue in a populace that has become corrupt. In relation to these tasks, Machiavelli places some faith in *institutions*, one of which is monarchy, or something comparable to it: ‘should a republic simply have to be created or to be maintained [where the populace has become corrupt], it would be necessary to introduce into it a form of government akin rather to a monarchy than to a democracy, so that those men whose arrogance is such that they cannot be corrected by legal processes, may yet be restrained to some extent by a quasi-regal power’ (*D* 164; Machiavelli makes the same point in his discussion of the gentry, *D* 246). Following a precedent set by Polybius, Cicero, and Livy, Machiavelli is also most emphatic on how the Romans, from Numa onwards, wielded religion as an ‘instrument’ to promote the virtues necessary ‘for the maintenance of a civilized state’ (*D* 139). Good military ‘training’ and ‘discipline’ also feature in Machiavelli’s explanation of the quality and longevity of the virtue of Rome and some other political societies. In *The Prince*, Machiavelli observes that ‘the main foundations of every state, new states as well as ancient or composite ones, are good laws and good arms’, and that ‘you cannot have good laws without good arms, and where there are good arms, good laws inevitably follow’ (39). Similarly, in the *Discourses*, he observes that where ‘good military discipline’ does not exist ‘there can neither be good laws nor

²⁷ Skinner, ‘Republican Ideal of Political Liberty’, p. 305; see also ‘Republican Virtues in an Age of Princes’, pp. 156–57; ‘Machiavelli on *virtù* and the Maintenance of Liberty’, pp. 173–78.

anything else that is good' (491), but elsewhere in this work he grants the priority to religion: 'where there is religion it is easy to teach men to use arms, but where there are arms, but no religion it is with difficulty that it can be introduced' (140). 'Those princes and those republics which desire to remain free from corruption, should above all else maintain incorrupt the ceremonies of their religion and should hold them always in veneration' (*D* 142–43). It seems that law, religion, and military discipline are interdependent components of a nexus in which the virtue of a populace is grounded.²⁸

In the great opening chapter of Book III, Machiavelli also grants great importance to 'renovation' by which he means a 'reduction of institutions to their starting-points' that makes them take on 'a new virtue' (*D* 385–90). Machiavelli sees renovation of this kind being brought about by events, such as the sacking of Rome by the Gauls; the introduction of institutions, such as the censorship and the tribunate; and great individuals who perform drastic actions, such as Lucius Junius Brutus and Manlius Torquatus. Many of these actions and events have the power to renovate in part because they revive the 'terror' and 'fear' of punishment for breaking the law in the populace. Machiavelli certainly takes Sallust's point here on the value of such emotions when it comes to preserving virtue (though whereas Sallust emphasizes the value of fear in citizens caused by an enemy that is external to the state, Machiavelli emphasizes the value of fear caused in citizens by the citizens' own rulers). Like Cicero and Sallust, he also emphasizes here the power an example set by 'the simple virtue of one man alone' (*D* 388) can have on the virtue of the populace, an emphasis which marks his discussion of how princes, by being virtuous themselves and setting a good example, can instill virtue in the populations they rule (*D* 158–59, 483–84).

Preoccupied, like the ancients, with the means of instilling and maintaining virtue in individuals and citizenries, Machiavelli identifies several other factors. The citizens of the modern German republics are so virtuous because they have 'little intercourse' with corrupt neighbours, and because they do not permit any citizens to 'live after the fashion of the gentry' (*D* 245), points which are confirmed in connection with Sparta and Rome (*D* 120–21, 338). Reiterating an ancient commonplace, Machiavelli also observes that idleness and wealth tend to promote corruption in people, and he recommends in the name of preserving virtue that citizens be kept poor and active, preferably by forcing them to join armies in the field (*D* 452). The populace is to be kept virtuous also by means of 'education',

²⁸ For more detailed analysis of Machiavelli's view that 'a substructure of religion is a prerequisite of civic virtue', see Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, pp. 186–94.

which besides those forms of discipline and training they receive in the military, includes forms of instruction in the home and school (though Machiavelli provides few details about either of these institutions; *D* 277–78, 490, 517, 522). He does, however, make clear that this education is to include the study of history and historical commentaries such as those he himself provides in *The Prince* and the *Discourses*, for (as we will observe in more detail later), this form of study provides people not only with examples of virtuous men to imitate, but also knowledge of the world which may be drawn upon by the prudent man to avoid the blunders and mistakes that constitute the bulk of human experience. Very generally, Machiavelli also emphasizes that meritocratic forms of socio-political organization promote virtue in the people. Finally, as Sallust's Catiline claims, one may incite men to virtuous action by creating situations in which the failure to be virtuous would mean death and destruction (*D* 440–43). Some of these means of instilling and preserving virtue are, however, perhaps not so distinct from law, since Machiavelli commonly speaks of some of them — such as military training, continual military service, and work — as things which may be forced upon people by law.

Paradise Lost

Unfallen Mankind

We have seen that in *Paradise Lost*, Milton, like the ancients, represents mankind as we know it as having an end, and, like the ancients, he understands human virtue essentially in terms of those qualities which enable humans to achieve it. But because he defines the end of man essentially in terms of the will and intention of its supernatural creator, Milton's table of virtues for mankind differs from that of the ancients. It differs, as well, from the rather more flexible Machiavellian table of virtues. His understanding of the preconditions of the virtuous life, its value and significance, and the means by which humans become and remain virtuous also differs from the republicans' understanding of these issues. Indeed, in some respects, Milton's epic vision of human virtue amounts to an explicit repudiation of the ethical thought that is one of the principal aspects of republican tradition. In order to see that this is the case, it is helpful to understand Milton's representation of mankind as he imagines it to have existed before the fall. For one of the ways in which the poem delineates the ethical condition of fallen mankind is by way of contrasting it with the ethical condition of the first humans in paradise. But it is also helpful to understand this because, even though one of the lessons of the

poem is that mankind is so different from what it was in paradise, there are some indications that some features of its ethical condition in paradise survive the fall.

Because part of the end of unfallen mankind is to feel delight and be happy, and because the 'happiest life' consists of 'Simplicity and spotless innocence' (IV. 317–18), innocence is represented as a virtue for Adam and Eve before the fall. Indeed, innocence is a quality that, as the narrator exclaims after describing how Eve 'Minister'd naked' to Raphael and Adam seated at the table, makes mankind 'deserving' of paradise (V. 445–46). It is thus among those qualities listed by the narrator when, after the fall, he describes them as being 'destitute and bare / Of all thir virtue' (IX. 1062–63). On this occasion and elsewhere, the narrator and other characters indicate that this innocence is a matter of knowledge (or a lack thereof): 'as a veil [it] / Had shadow'd them from knowing ill' (IX. 1054–55). To think of innocence in this sense as a virtue is entirely alien to republican ethical thought. But innocence is also that *feeling* which is so sharply differentiated in Book IV and at the conclusion of Book IX from the 'guilt' and 'shame' Adam and Eve feel after having disobeyed. 'Just confidence, and native righteousness, / And honor' are also identified by the narrator as being among the qualities that make up the virtue that is lost upon the fall (IX. 1056–57). These qualities are virtues for unfallen mankind in part because they, too, are essential aspects of Adam's and Eve's happiness. They enter their happiness because they are essential to that particular self-awareness in terms of which, from Books IV through IX, Milton represents the state of bliss: that feeling that there is nothing dishonourable, nothing impure, nothing to be ashamed of in one's body, thoughts, actions, words, or looks. As 'self-knowing' creatures (VII. 510), beings who are conscious of their worth (VIII. 502), Adam and Eve are happy in part because they are aware of their honour, goodness, and purity.

An important aspect of the delight and happiness of mankind in paradise also consists in the gratification of various desires and appetites: Adam and Eve delight in gratifying their hunger, thirst, and sexual desire; they also delight in gratifying their desires for conversation and knowledge, desires which are sometimes metaphorically described as thirst (VII. 66–68, VIII. 8). As Uriel informs the disguised Satan who seems to express his 'desire' to 'know / The works of God' (III. 694–95), those works 'are Pleasant to know' (III. 703), and Adam remarks upon how pleasurable and satisfying it is to come to know the things Raphael reveals to him (VII. 1–13, VIII. 180–81). However, as Raphael informs Adam in response to the latter's expression of his strong desire to know,

Knowledge is as food, and needs no less
Her Temperance over Appetite, to know
In measure what the mind may well contain,

Oppresses else with Surfeit, and soon turns
Wisdom to Folly, as Nourishment to Wind. (VII. 126–30)

As a characteristic which enables them to gratify appetite in a way that is delightful and avoids the oppressions and unpleasant odours that come with overindulgence and ‘surfeit’, temperance is thus another important virtue for unfallen mankind. Indeed, since a major dimension of the bliss of Adam and Eve in paradise derives from the proper gratification of ‘desire’ and ‘appetite’, and since temperance is the precondition for the proper gratification of any desire, it is, as Joshua Scodel observes, a central virtue of Adam and Eve in paradise.²⁹ And, as we observed in the previous chapter, Milton follows the ancients in identifying reason as the *faculty* which enables man to govern appetite and so to have and to exercise this virtue.

The wisdom to which Raphael refers is also a major virtue in relation to man’s end of happiness in the garden. Not, however, the speculative wisdom about the planets praised by Aristotle, nor the wisdom about policy and warfare Cicero and Machiavelli claimed to garner from history and pass on to men. It is something closer to what Aristotle thinks of as practical wisdom, an understanding of human limitations, and those things that directly concern one in daily life. Thus, in response to Adam’s wondering about the uses and ends of the heavenly bodies, and what to Eve appears his entrance ‘on studious thoughts abstruse’ (VIII. 40), Raphael tells him that ‘Heav’n is for thee too high / To know what passes there; be lowly wise: / Think only what concerns thee and thy being’ (VIII. 172–74). Adam responds by thanking the angel for having cleared his doubt and ‘freed’ him ‘from intricacies, taught to live / The easiest way, nor with perplexing thoughts / To interrupt the sweet of Life’ (VIII. 180–84). He realizes joy depends on his understanding that

not to know at large of things remote
From use, obscure and subtle, but to know
That which before us lies in daily life,
Is the prime Wisdom; (VIII. 191–94)

This wisdom includes a knowledge of themselves as creatures of a benevolent, generous, just, omnipotent God to whom they owe thanks and praise (IV. 444–45, VII. 76–77, 512–13). At the end of Book VIII we see that it also includes a proper awareness of the excellence of themselves and other creatures. After Adam tells Raphael how much Eve impresses him, Raphael says to him,

be not diffident
Of Wisdom, she deserts thee not, if thou

²⁹ Joshua Scodel, *Excess and the Mean in Early Modern English Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), pp. 255–84.

Dismiss not her, when most thou need'st her nigh,
 By attributing overmuch to things
 Less excellent, as thou thyself perceiv'st. (VIII. 562–66)

For both Adam and Eve, wisdom includes an understanding of the hierarchy of being that God created and a sharp sense of their own positions within it. That wisdom is a virtue because, as John Steadman puts it, 'to perform his proper function and offices and to observe his proper end, the rational creature must recognize his peculiar position in the scale of being and the distinctive properties which differentiate him from other creatures and from God'.³⁰

The physical beauty and strength of Adam and Eve which, as many have noted, are so lavishly described in the poem, are not merely ornamental qualities of unfallen man but further dimensions of a creature endowed by God with all of the qualities it requires in order to achieve its ends well and with ease. Since Adam takes 'delight' in Eve's 'Beauty and submissive Charms' (IV. 497–98) while Eve is pleased by Adam's 'manly grace' and his being 'fair indeed, and tall' (though at first she finds him less fair than she herself is (IV. 477)), the outward beauty of the first pair is a virtue in relation to the 'bliss / Ordain'd' for them by God (IV. 728–29). In addition, though the 'rural work' (V. 211) God assigns Adam and Eve is not back-breaking labour, it still involves upstaying, winding, binding, pruning, dressing, tending, manuring, reforming, cropping, and lopping — forms of manual labour which require, among other things, the physical strength with which Adam and, to a lesser degree, Eve are endowed. And since delicacy of touch is required to cultivate the garden and adorn it in such a way that it enhances the delight of mankind, Eve's 'tender hand' (XI. 276) counts as a quality enabling her to accomplish her work. It is also in relation to God's intention that mankind breed and 'multiply a Race of Worshipers', as the angels put it as they celebrate the creation (VII. 630), that the physical beauty of the first pair is a virtue: while Adam and Eve might still have bred in paradise even if they had they found each other to be ugly, the beauty of Eve and the 'manly grace' of Adam make each attractive to the other and enhance the ease and delight of the act of procreation which God wishes them to perform.

Mankind is to exercise dominion over the earth and its creatures, and it is in relation to this part of their end that the characteristics of just confidence, honour,

³⁰ John Steadman, *Milton and the Renaissance Hero* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 65. For a detailed consideration of how apocryphal and Old Testament wisdom literature as well as the New Testament inform the conception of wisdom for both fallen and unfallen mankind, see also John Reichert, *Milton's Wisdom: Nature and Scripture in 'Paradise Lost'* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992).

wisdom, and righteousness again qualify as virtues. For they enable and indeed qualify Adam and Eve for the dominion over the earth and all of its creatures which God granted to them. As the narrator observes in Book IV when we first observe the happy pair, the 'native Honor' in which they are clad, but also 'Truth, Wisdom, Sanctitude severe and pure', make them seem worthy of being the 'Lords of all' God wishes them to be (IV. 289–94). The physical appearances of Adam and of Eve (though to a lesser extent) again qualify as virtues in relation to this aspect of their end, for, as Adam tells Raphael, in her outward appearance, Eve resembles less 'His Image who made both, and less expressing / The character of that Dominion giv'n / O'er other Creatures' (VIII. 544–46). The outward appearance of Adam and Eve, that is, signifies the dominion God has given them and is in an important sense a visible justification of that dominion which, by virtue of being creatures endowed with reason, they rightly exercise (VII. 506–10).

God also makes Adam and Eve for worship, praise, thanksgiving, and adoration. It is in relation to these ends that wisdom, love, faith, but also gratitude are most sharply defined as virtues of unfallen man, though they also enter into their ability to delight in their condition, love each other, procreate, and exercise dominion over the creation. Thus, it is in part out of their wisdom, their understanding of God as their 'infinitely good' (IV. 414) creator who has placed them in the happy garden and given them all, that they acknowledge him as such and adore and thank him as they do. And it is in part because they really love him that their acts of praise and thanksgiving are not grudgingly performed rites and ceremonies but modes of the 'adoration pure / Which God likes best' (IV. 737–38). Because they are properly constituted in their hearts, that is, they can 'with heart and voice and eyes / Directed in Devotion [. . .] adore / And worship God Supreme who made him chief / Of all his works' (VII. 513–16). As a freely chosen belief in a loving and omnipotent God — that is, a belief brought about by the will subject to reason — faith is perhaps ultimately a part of wisdom, where wisdom is understood as all true belief grounded in reason working upon experience. Understood in this way, faith, too, is a virtue for Adam and Eve before the fall, since it is the basis for those acts of prayer, praise, worship, magnification, extolling, and thanksgiving which God wishes them to perform and which they do in fact continually perform up until the fall. Faith in this sense also enables them to trust in and worship God even when the *rationale* God has for arranging things as he has is obscure, or when, as a result of God deliberately concealing these reasons, it is entirely unknown to them. Finally, as Peter Medine has observed, gratitude is a further important quality of

the properly constituted heart which qualifies Adam and Eve to thank and to praise God well.³¹

Several of the particular characteristics we have so far considered also count as virtues in relation to obedience, where that is understood simply in terms of doing what God wishes them to do. For though God refers to his command to abstain from the Tree of Knowledge as his 'sole Command' (III. 94), and though he does not formally command them to work, to procreate, to love each other, to rule the earth, or to behave in ways that are appropriate to their positions in the scale of being, Adam and Eve nevertheless feel that these activities are ones which God wills them to perform since he has 'appointed', 'ordained', 'enjoin'd', and 'assign'd' them (IV. 619, 636, 726, IX. 207, 231). Adam's and Eve's performance of these actions is a kind of obedience, and the qualities which enable this performance are virtues in relation to that end. That love of God is a virtue in relation to the end of obedience is confirmed by Raphael when he asserts that the free service required by God of man and angel is contingent upon a freely chosen love: 'freely we serve, / Because we freely love, as in our will / To love or not' (V. 538–40). And he concludes his discussion with Adam and Eve by reasserting that obedience is something that follows from loving him: 'Be strong, live happy, and love, but first of all / Him whom to love is to obey' (VIII. 633–34).

The standing of faith (besides love) as a primary virtue in relation to obedience is emphasized in Book IX. In response to Adam's resistance to the idea that they work alone, Eve feels that Adam doubts her 'firmness' to God and him, fears that her 'firm Faith and Love / Can by his [Satan's] fraud be shak'n or seduc't' (IX. 279–87). Adam responds by saying he wishes only to spare her the aspersion the attempt would cast upon her, since such an attempt would be based on the supposition that she is 'Not incorruptible of Faith, not proof / Against temptation' (IX. 298–99). Claiming that he has access to 'every Virtue' (including wisdom and outward strength) in the presence of Eve, he wonders why she does not also consider him to be 'best witness of thy Virtue tri'd' (IX. 310–17). Eve takes this to imply 'Less attribúted to her Faith sincere' (IX. 320) and continues to press her suggestion by posing a pointed rhetorical question: 'what is Faith, Love, Virtue unassay'd / Alone, without exterior help sustain'd?' (IX. 335–36). Observing that the freedom of the will depends on its obeying reason, but also that reason may be misled — as though faith, virtue, and love are not a matter of the will only but of

³¹ Peter E. Medine, 'Gratitude and *Paradise Lost*: A Neglected Context', in *Milton and the Grounds of Contention*, ed. by Mark Kelley, Michael Lieb, and John T. Shawcross (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2003), pp. 115–49.

the will directed by reason keeping strictest watch — Adam consents to Eve's request and bids her farewell by telling her to 'rely / On what thou hast of virtue' (IX. 373–74). After the fall, Adam observes that faith is one of the virtues they have lost (IX. 1075), and he concludes by seeing the entire episode as moving out of a mistaken understanding of how best to prove what in relation to their end of obedience is a crucial virtue:

Let none henceforth seek needless cause to approve
The Faith they owe; when earnestly they seek
Such proof, conclude, they then begin to fail. (IX. 1140–42)

As we observed in the previous chapter, though Adam and Eve, because they are both humans, have to a great extent the same end, they also have ends which in some ways are peculiar to each, for they are 'Not equal, as their sex not equal seem'd' (IV. 296). Insofar as their natures and ends differ, so too do their virtues. Thus, Adam's superior 'mind / And inward Faculties, which most excel' (VIII. 541–42) qualify him to contemplate and to govern Eve as he is made to do. And as Eve observes, Adam's 'manly grace / And wisdom' qualify him to rule her, for they excel her own beauty (IV. 490–91). Eve's inner faculties, slightly inferior to those of Adam, are proper for her since they suit her for the role of obeying her husband while still qualifying her for the 'fellowship', 'society', and 'conversation' both need in order to be happy. Adam's strength of body, his being 'of limb / Heroic built' as Satan observes (IX. 484–85), is a virtue because it qualifies him for deeds of valour, and it is worth noting that though he is not called upon to perform such deeds (because Satan resorts to guile rather than force in order to defeat mankind), both Satan and Adam recognize the possibility of a physical contest between them (IX. 309–12, 484–88). Eve's 'perfect beauty' (IV. 634) is perhaps not strictly speaking a virtue, since it is not something she *exercises* in order to achieve her end. But it is closely allied to her virtues since it is a quality which enables her to fulfill the role of procreation and since, as Adam observes, it is a quality that makes 'her amiable' to him (VIII. 482–84). As Raphael tells Adam, her physical beauty is 'worthy' of his cherishing, honouring, and love (VIII. 568), and, as the Son reminds him after the fall, she was 'Adorn'd' and 'lovely to attract' his love (i.e. *so that* she could attract his love), but not his subjection (X. 151–53).

Some of the characteristics of Adam and Eve which enable them to achieve their end or purpose and which therefore qualify as virtues for them are thus innocence, honour, confidence, sanctitude, temperance, physical strength, physical beauty, love, faith, wisdom, and gratitude. But these are by no means all of their virtues, for Milton envisions every characteristic of unfallen human nature as a characteristic that qualifies it in one way or another to live as God wishes. That is

what it means to be made perfect, as God and Raphael say they are and as Adam and Eve know they are (V. 524, VIII. 642, X. 150): it is to be constituted in such a way that all of one's characteristics enable and even dispose and make it easy for (but do not force) one to achieve one's purpose well and with ease. It is to be made in such a way, that is, that all of one's characteristics are virtues, or, as they are sometimes called, 'perfections'. So, when Adam goes to greet Raphael in Book V, he 'walks forth, without more train / Accompanied than with his own complete / Perfections' (V. 351–53). In addition, it is important to see that one characteristic may qualify them to achieve several aspects of their end, and some qualities fortify and even make possible others: wisdom fortifies the love of God, while temperance really makes faith possible, since temperance is the condition out of which one is free (from passion and appetite) to choose to believe truths about or lies against one's maker.³² Finally, rather than representing unfallen human beings as creatures in whom passion and desire have been extinguished, Milton represents them as complex beings within whom a wide range of powerful appetites, desires, and passions are cultivated, directed, governed, and controlled — in some cases with some difficulty — mainly by way of exertions of inward faculties of reason and memory.³³

There are, however, some notable absences from the list of virtues, the first of which is justice. God says he made Adam and Eve 'just and right' (III. 98); Eve deems what Adam says to be 'just and right' (IV. 443); Adam and Eve are to produce a 'Race of Worshippers, / Holy and just' (VII. 630–31); Adam's self-esteem is to be 'grounded on just and right' (VIII. 572). But there is no account of what justice is nor any substantial description of Adam and Eve administering or dispensing it, either to themselves or to the creatures they rule. And coming from the ancients and Machiavelli, one cannot help but notice that the only things described as being 'prudent' are Satan and the crane (II. 468, VII. 430). Though Adam and Eve are to have a certain practical wisdom and though they certainly reason about and discuss various chances, risks, and outcomes, Milton clearly differentiates them from the virtuous humans discussed by Sallust, Cicero, Livy, and Machiavelli in part by never naming that wisdom as 'prudence'. But that neither justice nor prudence feature as major virtues in paradise is hardly surprising, given that man is not a *zōon politikon*, human society in Eden is not a political society (and never would have

³² For further commentary on the interrelationships between the virtues, see Grossman, 'Authors to Themselves', pp. 91–125.

³³ See Michael Schoenfeldt, "'Commotions Strange': Passion in *Paradise Lost*", in *Reading the Early Modern Passions*, ed. by Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe, and Mary Floyd-Wilson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), pp. 43–67.

been), there are no civil laws or laws of nations to be made or administered, and there are no property disputes (though Adam and Eve are said to possess the earth).

Constituted in such a way that virtually everything about them enables and even disposes them to fulfill their ends, Adam and Eve, up until the fall, act and behave in such a way that they do in fact fulfill those ends. And it is this virtuous activity, this ongoing exercise of all of their virtues, which is so central to Milton's vision of the perfect human existence. Like the ancients, that is to say, Milton conceives of the life of virtue and the state of happiness not simply in terms of the possession of virtues but in terms of their exercise, and not as something to come after the life of virtue, but in terms of that life itself. And it is important to see that, at least from one perspective, the exercise of virtue is highly variegated: Adam and Eve exercise it by believing, trusting, working, conversing, contemplating, worshipping, praising, giving thanks, copulating, eating, remembering, preparing food, and abstaining from the Tree of Knowledge (the active nature of which is emphasized by Raphael's reference to it as an act of 'persevering' (VIII. 639)). Even sleeping is part of the exercise of virtue for them, since their sound and refreshing sleep is something that is appointed for them by God during the night after their day labours and something of which they are capable because they are healthy, temperate, pure, innocent, conscious of their worth, and obedient. Thus, Adam's 'sleep / Was Aery light, from pure digestion bred, / And temperate vapors bland' while he stands, but he and Eve enjoy a 'grosser sleep / Bred of unkindly fumes' immediately after their intemperate indulgence in 'that fallacious Fruit, / That with exhilarating vapor bland / About thir spirits had play'd' (V. 3–5, IX. 1046–50). Just as all characteristics of the perfect human beings are virtues, that is, so all of their actions constitute an exercise of some aspect of these virtues. All of these activities and exercises, however, are unified and indeed the same in a sense, for they are all aspects of the life God intended them to live when he made them, and willed them to live after he made them.

* * *

The complete life of virtue for Adam and Eve in paradise, then, consists in being possessed of virtues, exercising them, and exercising them out of particular feelings and beliefs with the aim of achieving their ends, where their ends are defined essentially in terms of what God intends and wills for them.³⁴ In order to lead this life of virtue, unfallen human nature, unlike human nature as envisaged by the

³⁴ For the active dimension of prelapsarian virtue, and the way in which it conforms with Milton's account of virtue in *Areopagitica*, see Diane Kelsey McColley, *Milton's Eve* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), pp. 140–86.

ancients, does not need to exist within a political society. This is because Adam and Eve are virtuous by nature and so do not need a political society in order to become so. And though unfallen mankind, like mankind as understood by the ancients and Machiavelli, requires what Aristotle calls 'necessaries' (clothing not included), Milton represents it as being capable of providing them for itself without the assistance of labourers. This still would not necessarily mean that Adam and Eve did not require some kind of society, or at least an expanded household that included labourers. For Milton might have aligned himself with the view of Aristotle and Lycurgus³⁵ that, though capable of the manual labour involved in providing these necessities, humans diminish their capacity for cultivating and exercising virtue by engaging in such labour, and therefore ought not to do so. And he might have represented paradise as a place where either mankind did not need to labour in order to acquire food and drink, or there were beings who, like Aristotle's natural human slaves, lacked sufficient reason to be virtuous but had enough reason to labour well. Instead of doing this, he makes manual labour an integral part of the life of virtue, with the result that the preconditions for the life of virtue in paradise are fundamentally different from those envisioned for noble human beings by many of the ancients.

The unfallen rational human creature as Milton represents it, however, does need another unfallen human in order to live to the full what for it is the life of virtue.³⁶ As Adam tells Eve, loving another human being is not the lowest end of mankind (IX. 241), and as Raphael tells Adam, 'without Love' between members of the same species there is 'no happiness' (VIII. 621). This means that a rationally controlled desire and passion for another being of the same species is a virtue for unfallen mankind, and that unfallen humans need another human in order to live the life of virtue to the full, where that is understood in terms of the bliss God wills for man. But that *one* suffices for this end is indicated when God looks down on 'the only two / Of mankind, in the happy Garden plac't, / Reaping immortal fruits of joy and love, / Uninterrupted joy, unrivall'd love / In blissful solitude' (III. 65–69). The couple is also sufficient on its own to achieve the end of procreation, though it seems their children would have had to contribute in order to produce enough people to control the luxuriant garden. Had Adam and Eve stood, there would have been some kind of larger group, 'a Race of Worshippers / Holy and just' (VII. 630–31), and Adam and Eve would have taken pleasure in being the

³⁵ See Plutarch, 'Lycurgus', in *Greek Lives*, trans. by Robin Waterfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 33.

³⁶ For a comprehensive commentary on this need, see Thomas Luxon, *Single Imperfection: Milton, Marriage and Friendship* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2005), pp. 101–21.

parents of it. However, the existence of such a group and membership within it are not essential to their virtue or happiness. Milton's epic may thus be said, as Joshua Scodel puts it, to have 'contributed to the trend in early modern literature toward celebrating a private sphere of erotic intensity at the expense of the sociopolitical realm'.³⁷ In so doing, the poem departs from the Aristotelian and Ciceronian view that in order to live the life of moral virtue to the full, and in order to know the greatest happiness, humans need to live in and for a political society.

In order to exercise all of their virtues, Adam and Eve also need to exist in a particular environment, the garden, which is part of the entire universe God framed for man's delightful use (IV. 692). For the garden is not simply a place within which perfect humans happen to live the life of virtue, but an environment in relation to which at least some of their characteristics count as virtues and a place that is deeply integrated with their exercise. That is to say that God endues their bodies and minds with characteristics that enable and dispose them to achieve *all* of their ends not wherever they may find themselves, but only in the 'temperate Clime' of paradise (XII. 636). Thus, their physical strength and beauty are virtues in part because paradise is an environment in which organisms endowed with those qualities may gather food easily, construct adequate shelter easily, play with and rule over animals without worrying about being devoured by them, and run about naked in comfort. In relation to a more severe climate and environment, such as that which is brought about by the fall, the physical characteristics of unfallen humans would be less qualified to enable and dispose them to achieve happiness, or at least to minimize pain — they would need harder bodies, tougher skins. This is not to say that were unfallen Adam and Eve for some reason placed in a torrid clime they would not be virtuous, nor that they could not perform virtuous deeds. Were they to find themselves amongst devils in a harsh clime, they could still trust in God and act with the aim of standing approved in his sight and so live the life of virtue to an extent. But in order to live what for them is the life of virtue to the full, in a way which permits and requires them to exercise *all* of their virtues, including their outward perfections, they need the 'delicious place' in which God first places them (IV. 729).

Finally, since all things proceed from God and are sustained by him, there is a very basic sense in which Adam and Eve need God not just to live what for them is the life of virtue, but merely to exist. And God directly intervenes shortly after he has created mankind in order to set his creatures on the path of virtue: after appearing to Adam in a dream and placing him in paradise, he then appears to him as a 'Presence Divine' and directly informs him of the conditions of his existence

³⁷ Scodel, *Excess and the Mean in Early Modern English Literature*, p. 256.

there. After Eve is created, she is, according to Adam, 'Led [to him] by her Heav'nly Maker, though unseen, / And guided by his voice' (VIII. 485–86); according to Eve, she is warned by a 'voice', presumably God's, not to long for herself, and instructed to enjoy the embraces of Adam and 'bear Multitudes / like thyself' (IV. 465–74). But if, as Abdiel tells Satan, God and Nature bid the same (VI. 176), and if Adam and Eve have a Nature that bids them what to do, do they need God in order to live the life of virtue once God has created the world and established the conditions of their existence (including the sole command) in paradise? As beings who are virtuous by nature and who have Reason for their law, Adam and Eve are autonomous and do not need God's assistance to exercise the virtues which he has given to them. They are, as God himself says, 'Authors to themselves in all / Both what they judge and what they choose' (III. 122–23). Dependent upon his creator for what he is and for the conditions of his existence, unfallen man does not depend upon him to author those works which constitute the life of virtue under those conditions.

* * *

'That thou art happy, owe to God; / That thou continu'st such, owe to thyself, / That is, to thy obedience' (V. 520–22). In saying this to Adam, Raphael indicates that one thing that depends upon Adam and Eve's virtue is their own happiness, where that happiness is defined in terms of a complex existence in paradise that includes proving their love and allegiance to God, pleasing God, and receiving praise from God for serving him (III. 106). Since that existence will also include important developments of their own natures over time, such as its ascent to the nature of angels and its ascent to God through contemplation, those developments are also contingent upon man's ongoing exercise of virtue — Adam and Eve need to exercise their virtues over a long period of time in order to evolve to higher states of being. Since their nature is perfect from the start, these higher states of being towards which they are to develop are perhaps not so much the perfection of their nature, as natures of a different kind which, like their initial human natures, are perfect but which are higher on the scale of being. In addition to this, some virtues, such as temperance, are important and valuable because the possibility for other virtues, such as faith, depends upon them.

In his discussion with God in Book VIII, Adam claims that there is one respect in which he is imperfect, for, unlike God, he cannot be happy, though in paradise, 'In solitude' (VIII. 364), by which he means without another human being 'fit to participate / All rational delight' (VIII. 390–91); Eve claims that her happiness in paradise is contingent upon her being with Adam (IV. 635–56). Since the ongoing existence of a human in paradise is contingent upon his or her exercising virtue, the

complete happiness of Adam thus depends upon his having a virtuous companion (though it need not be Eve), and the complete happiness of Eve depends upon her having a virtuous companion (though it need not be Adam). Part of the value and importance of Eve's virtue thus derives from the fact that Adam needs a virtuous individual of different sex, such as she is, to be happy, and part of the value and importance of Adam's virtue derives from the fact that Eve needs a virtuous individual of different sex, such as he is, to be fully happy. But Adam's and Eve's obeying God's command not to eat, and therefore their continued *existence* in paradise, is not contingent upon the virtue of any other individual in particular: each is made sufficient to have stood, though free to fall, regardless of what the other does. Thus, the situation only 'seem'd remediless' to Adam when Eve had fallen but he had not, as though he was still capable of standing (IX. 919). And as the narrator says at the opening of Book X, 'the mind / Of Man, with strength entire, and free will arm'd' was 'Complete to have discover'd and repulst / Whatever wiles of Foe or seeming Friend' (X. 8–11). Since both Adam and Eve are endowed with the mind of man, each is sufficient to stand on his/her own, no matter what the other does. Certainly, as Adam argues to Eve in Book IX, an individual's ability to obey God's command not to eat and therefore remain in paradise may be affected by another's presence, and an individual's disobedience may powerfully influence the ability of that individual's mate to persevere in obeying: as Adam says to the fallen Eve, he feels 'The Link of Nature draw' him to disobey as she has (IX. 914). But neither the absence of an individual who obeys God's command not to eat nor the presence of an individual who disobeys that command destroys the capacity of an unfallen human being to persevere in obeying God and to remain in paradise.

The virtue and happiness of the human beings who descend from the first unfallen humans, however, are at stake when the first humans engage in the act of choosing. As Raphael tells Adam after having warned him to heed God's great command and to prevent passion from swaying his judgment, 'thine and of all thy Sons / The weal or woe in thee is plac't' (VIII. 37–38); as God observed earlier, 'His crime makes guilty all his Sons' (III. 290). But it is important to note that God's 'His' must refer to both Adam's and Eve's, not just Adam's, and not just Eve's, since the account of the fall indicates that if Eve but not Adam had fallen, all of mankind would not have been made guilty: Adam's eating is described as the 'completing of the mortal Sin / Original', and an incomplete Sin, one in which Adam did not participate, would not have resulted in the woe of all of mankind (IX. 1003–04). The disobedience of one member of the first pair, that is, is not sufficient to make man guilty of sin and force him to live in world of woe — it is only a jointly committed crime that can do so.

None of the republicans asserts that the state of the universe is ever at stake when humans choose how to behave. But because, in Milton's poem, mankind is so deeply integrated with his immediate environment and the entire universe that is created by God for him, the masterwork, and because God, out of justice, wishes to punish him in a particular way for his crime, the poem represents the state of the universe as depending to an important extent upon his living the life of virtue. Thus, as long as Adam and Eve live in accordance with all of their perfections, the universe, which was 'entirely good' (VII. 549), and paradise, which is one small but central part of it, will continue to exist and function in a harmonious fashion. But immediately upon Eve's disobedience, 'Earth felt the wound, and Nature from her seat / Sighing through all her Works gave signs of woe, / That all was lost' (IX. 782–84). The poem then describes not only the details of this wound but also the ways in which the unfallen angels, on God's instructions, alter the position of the sun, the office of the moon, the planetary motions, the winds, and the poles of the earth in such a way that the climate of the entire earth becomes inclement to man and all creatures. But for man's disobedience, the radical transformation of the world at the end of time would not have occurred either.

Because the universe in which unfallen mankind exists contains agents that care for him and despise God, the ethical quality of his life also has consequences for those agents, just as the behaviour of the heroes in ancient epic has consequences for the pagan gods. Thus, because, as Raphael informs Adam, he and other unfallen angels take an interest in and care for mankind (VIII. 639–40), their condition is to some extent affected by man's exercise of virtue. Though the angels enjoy perfect bliss in heaven, upon the act of disobedience, 'Up into Heav'n from Paradise in haste / Th'Angelic Guards ascended, mute and sad / For Man' (X. 17–19). And when 'th' unwelcome news' reaches heaven, 'displeas'd / All were who heard, dim sadness did not spare / That time Celestial visages, yet mixt / With pity, violated not thir bliss' (X. 21–25). The devils, on the other hand, take delight in man's fall, and are permitted to range the world as a result of it. There is also an important sense in which the pleasure and emotional state of God himself is affected by his creature's exercise of virtue: asking 'what pleasure' he could have received from mankind had he made its obedience a matter of necessity rather than choice, God indicates that he does receive some kind of pleasure from man's freely chosen obedience (III. 107–11). And it is adoration pure that God likes best. As the Son makes clear in his response to God's grand speech at the opening of Book III, God also experiences displeasure, and the passions of 'anger' and 'wrath', as a result of man's disobedience (III. 263–64). As the narrator puts it at the opening of Book IX, 'On the part of Heav'n' after the fall, there is 'distance and distaste, / Anger and just rebuke' (IX. 8–10). Indeed,

there is some indication that for the entire duration of human history, God will be brooding over man's crime against him, since it is only at the end of time that wrath will be cleared away. The behaviour of unfallen mankind is thus significant in the sense that it affects the pleasures, emotional states, modes of happiness, and activities of God and both fallen and unfallen angels.

It might also appear as though God's goodness and power, which include his ability to achieve his ends, may in some sense depend upon mankind living the life of virtue, since his failure to live this life brings Sin and Death into a world that was so pure and good, and disrupts the entire universe. Satan and the devils certainly think so; indeed, it is because they believe that inducing man to fall will in some sense frustrate God's ends, diminish him, compromise his goodness, and constitute a significant form of vengeance against him that they pursue this project and celebrate its success. But the poem powerfully denies that this is the case by way of a vision of a God who is not just more powerful than other agents but omnipotent, and a vision of human history as a development of goodness out of the evil that man brought into the world. Though Satan aims to pervert God's end of bringing forth good out of evil (I. 162–65), God permits him to act so that he 'enrag'd might see / How all his malice serv'd but to bring forth / Infinite goodness, grace and mercy shown / On Man by him seduc't' (I. 216–19). As the angels celebrating the creation put it, God's creation of the world demonstrates that 'his evil / Thou usest, and from thence creat'st more good' (VII. 615–16). And as Adam observes after Michael has revealed how this is done, 'O goodness infinite, goodness immense! / That all this good of evil shall produce, / And evil turn to good' (XII. 469–71). God is an infinitely good, omnipotent deity who, as the hymning angels observe, can be neither impaired nor diminished in any way by anything (VII. 602–32).

* * *

That the virtue of unfallen mankind derives from God's initial act of creation follows from the general propositions that all things proceed from God and that God is the 'Author and end of all things' (V. 469–70, VII. 591). This non-Aristotelian, non-Machiavellian view of how humans become virtuous is confirmed by the assertions that God 'made him [man] just and right' (III. 98), made him 'perfet' and 'good' (V. 524–25), poured his gifts, both inward and outward, on man (VIII. 220–21), created him in his image (VII. 520), and 'endued' him with knowledge of the creation (VIII. 353–54). But though God's initial act of creation may be the ultimate source of human virtue, several other things enter into its maintenance and development. As we have seen, the wisdom of Adam and Eve, unlike their physical beauty and strength which seem to be fairly inert, develops over time,

in part as a result of the instruction they receive from God. Raphael, too, enhances their wisdom, since by narrating the war in heaven and urging Adam to profit from having heard 'By terrible Example the reward / Of disobedience' (VII. 910–11), he provides them with a knowledge of Satan and his plot to ruin them which up until that point in time they did not have. As Grossman puts it, 'Raphael has given Adam a heavenly history to facilitate his understanding of divine ways'.³⁸ And, as Adam remarks, these are things which 'yet concern'd / Our knowing, as to highest wisdom seem'd' (VII. 82–83). We have also seen that it is Raphael who instructs Adam on the nature of true wisdom concerning other issues, such as natural science, his relationship with Eve and the other animals, and the love of angels. Raphael's discourse also encourages the faith and love of Adam and Eve, since he emphasizes the happiness of those angels who stand fast in faith and continue to love God, and he explicitly encourages them to love and believe in the goodness and justice of God.

Adam remarks that the roving mind may also be taught this wisdom by way of 'experience' (apart from warnings and direct instruction). This claim is borne out by his description of how his understanding of God and the creation develops in light of his first experiences in the garden. In addition, both Adam and Eve become aware of their environment and their place within it in part out of their firsthand experience of its fecundity and their own inability to control it. It is also worth noting that there are some suggestions that even for unfallen agents, the disposition and capacity to obey God is a function of experience. As Abdiel informs Satan, 'by experience taught we know how good, / And of our good, and of our dignity / How provident he is' (V. 826–28). And in Book VIII, Raphael remarks that God sends the angels on errands 'to enure / Our prompt obedience' (VIII. 239–40). 'Enure' is a version of 'inure' which derives from a late Middle English term meaning 'in use, in practice', and which has the sense of 'to accustom' or 'to habituate'. There was also an old usage deriving from Latin *inurere*, the meaning of which was to brand, or to impress by burning. So it is as though by continually or repeatedly obeying God, unfallen rational agents may become accustomed or habituated to doing so, have it deeply ingrained if not burned into them, and so develop a kind of inner disposition to continue to do so. The suggestion that the repeated performance of particular acts is conducive to virtue, one which recalls Aristotle's understanding of the moral virtues, is perhaps confirmed by God's remark that man will dwell on earth

³⁸ Grossman, *Authors to Themselves*, p. 119.

till by degrees of merit rais'd
 They open to themselves at length the way
 Up hither, under long obedience tri'd. (VII. 157–59)

Unfallen man, it seems, is capable of raising himself, enhancing his merit and virtue, and so qualifying himself to ascend to heaven, by way of a protracted act of obeying. While Raphael does not say that Adam and Eve will develop a *habit* as a result of long obedience and that that habit is constitutive of virtue, he does suggest that, like that of the angels, the obedience of mankind may become 'enured' over time. Adam perhaps confirms this implication that virtue is to some extent a matter of practice when he observes that thinking about things remote from use may have the undesirable effect of rendering one 'Unpractic'd' in things of greatest concern (VIII. 197).

There are also some indications that, though each unfallen human being is capable of standing on his or her own, the virtue of each may be fortified by the presence of the other, and the consciousness of that presence. Thus, resisting Eve's suggestion that they divide their labours, Adam observes that there is indeed a version of shame in paradise:

I from the influence of thy looks receive
 Access in every Virtue, in thy sight
 More wise, more watchful, stronger, if need were
 Of outward strength; while shame, thou looking on,
 Shame, to be overcome or over-reach't
 Would utmost vigor raise, and rais'd unite. (IX. 309–14)

Adam here claims that some aspects of his virtue — his wisdom, strength, and vigour — are enhanced by the presence of Eve, his awareness of that presence, and his concern to avoid the shame he *would* feel were he to fail in that presence. In her response, Eve does not deny this claim, nor does she deny that her own virtue is enhanced by her awareness of the presence of Adam. She rather objects to the proposition that they *need* to stay together in order to withstand Satan and prove their faith, virtue, and love, and in this she is right: the fact that she disobeys when separated from Adam means neither that she was insufficient to have stood on her own, nor that, had she been with Adam when Satan made the scene, neither she nor Adam would have disobeyed. But it does seem that, even though the virtue of each is sufficient to enable them to stand alone, it may be stronger when they are together.

Finally, some virtues of unfallen man are developed and strengthened by way of his own deliberate, voluntary efforts and choice to be virtuous — it is not just the act of obedience, but the very virtue which makes that act good and pleasing to God which is in part the product of an exercise of free will. For the wisdom about

the creation which Adam achieves is not simply imposed or given to him by Raphael, but is in part the result of Adam's expression of his own desire for knowledge which, as Raphael observes, is within bounds and 'human measure' (VII.640). Adam's and Eve's growing wisdom, that is, is to some extent a function of their temperance, of their holding reason to governing the appetite for knowledge, and of their acting on the basis of that control. In addition, as Raphael explains to Adam, the fundamental virtue of love of God is not given to free agents, but is a product of their choice: 'freely we serve, / Because we freely love, as in our will / To love or not' (V. 538–40). Freely they also believe in the goodness and power of God, until freely they believe the lies against their maker that Satan tells them (X. 42). Since love and faith are virtues, and since both are products of the ongoing exercise of free will, virtue is in an important way the result of the human exercise of free will. Unfallen human nature, though created virtuous, is thus nevertheless to a great extent responsible for its remaining so, and for the ongoing cultivation of those characteristics which enable it to achieve its end well, and with delight.³⁹

Fallen Mankind

There must be a sense in which human depravity as represented by the poem is a virtue for mankind in relation to his fallen condition. For, as we have seen, depravity, sin, and corruption are defined in terms of the displacement of reason by passion as the ruler of the will, the loss of the freedom from passion and appetite to serve God, intemperance, incontinence, false wisdom, memory loss, guilt, shame, a lack of confidence, and physical corruptibility. Sin and depravity, in short, are defined in terms of the loss of what, *for unfallen mankind*, are virtues. But it is precisely these qualities and inner states that make fallen human existence so miserable and the world a world of woe. Since misery is part of man's end in this world, and since virtue is what enables a thing to reach its end, these qualities must in some sense be virtues for the human animal once it has disobeyed God and entered that state of being to destruction sacred and devote. This kind of paradox confirms those statements in the poem (which are so incomprehensible to Satan and the

³⁹ For observations on how Adam and Eve are to cultivate not just the garden, but themselves, see Arthur Barker, 'Paradise Lost: The Relevance of Regeneration', in *'Paradise Lost': A Tercentenary Tribute*, ed. by Balachandra Rajan (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), pp. 60–64; Lewalski, 'Paradise Lost and Milton's Politics', pp. 159–63; McColley, *Milton's Eve*, pp. 40, 67–68, 110–39; Grossman, 'Authors to Themselves', pp. 68–90; Fish, *How Milton Works*, pp. 527–54.

devils) concerning how God cannot be diminished and how he brings good out of evil. Sin and Death are, as God himself claims, in a sense good, for they do his work: watching them enter the world, God claims that he ‘drew them hither [to the earth] / My Hell-hounds, to lick up the draff and filth / Which man’s polluting Sin with taint hath shed / On what was pure’ (X. 629–32). As he observes at the opening of Book XI, Death is also good, in the sense that it is man’s ‘final remedy’, for it prevents man’s existence from being one of eternal ‘woe’ (XI. 60–62). Similarly, the result of the work of Sin and Death in man — human depravity — is good in the sense that it eminently qualifies mankind for the suffering God wills for it as a result of its having committed crimes against itself and its maker.

But since suffering and death are not the only thing God wills for his disobedient creature, virtue for that creature consists in more than those qualities that qualify him for a long day’s dying. In relation to his end of enduring his existence and facing death patiently, without complaint or lamentation, without anger or hatred or vengeance against those who may make his suffering worse than it need be, wisdom is a central virtue. And it is because this is the case that Michael works to provide it to Adam and Eve before sending them forth to achieve their new ends in the fallen world, and that Milton seems to want to provide to his readers. The wisdom Michael directs Adam and us to derive from his vision of history consists mainly of an awareness of the basic truths of Christianity as Milton understands them. This is clear from the start when Michael informs Adam that he will ‘show’ Adam what shall come in future days so that he ‘may’st believe, and be confirm’d’ that

in Valley and in Plain
 God is as here, and will be found alike
 Present, and of his presence many a sign
 Still following thee, still compassing thee round
 With goodness and paternal Love, his Face
 Express, and of his steps the track Divine. (XI. 349–54)

As we will see in Chapter 5, Michael proceeds to present human history as the occasion for knowing a wide range of other propositions, many of which are less consoling than this concerning the ubiquity of God. On the basis of this presentation, Adam comes finally to know that the Son is, as Michael says, ‘thy Saviour and thy Lord’ (XII. 544). ‘Greatly instructed’, he sums up by saying

Henceforth I learn, that to obey is best,
 And love with fear the only God, to walk
 As in his presence, ever to observe
 His providence, and on him sole depend,
 Merciful over all his works, with good

Still overcoming evil, and by small
 Accomplishing great things, by things deem'd weak
 Subverting worldly strong, and worldly wise
 By simply meek; that suffering for Truth's sake
 Is fortitude to highest victory,
 And to the faithful Death the Gate of Life;
 Taught this by his example whom I now
 Acknowledge my Redeemer ever blest. (XII. 561–73)

Having learned this, Adam, according to Michael, has achieved 'the sum / Of wisdom' (XII. 575), but this wisdom concerning the efficacy of meekness and suffering — surely the wisdom of which Paul speaks at the opening of I Corinthians — has little in common with the wisdom about war and politics which the republicans valued so highly and which they derived from their study of history. This Christian wisdom is, moreover, explicitly repudiated by Machiavelli who felt not only that the worldly strong defeated those who attempted to subvert them through meekness and suffering, but also that those who preached this ethos, as Milton through Michael here does, 'have made the world weak, and [...] handed it over as a prey to the wicked, who run it successfully and securely since they are well aware that the generality of men, with paradise for their goal, consider how best to bear, rather than how best to avenge, their injuries' (*D* 277–78). Though Machiavelli displays some admiration for figures such as the Son and St Francis, and though some traces of Christian sentiment and belief remain in his political writings, one of the lessons of both *The Prince* and the *Discourses* is that the world is a place in which one overcomes the worldly strong and wise only by being more worldly strong or wise than them.

In paradise, one of the main reasons temperance is a virtue is that it is intrinsic to the bliss that is ordained for mankind; in the fallen world, temperance is a virtue mainly because it enables man to fulfill his end of living and dying without more pain and abjection than is necessary to the fulfilment of God's justice. Thus Michael announces to Adam at the outset that he is

to learn

True patience, and to temper joy with fear
 And pious sorrow, equally inur'd
 By moderation either state to bear,
 Prosperous or adverse: so shalt thou lead
 Safest thy life, and best prepar'd endure
 Thy mortal passage when it comes. (XI. 360–66)

That moderation is one of the characteristics that will help fallen mankind 'bear' its existence and prepare for and 'endure' its death in the proper manner is

emphasized by Michael when he later informs Adam that some by violent stroke, fire, flood, or famine will die, 'by Intemperance more / In Meats and Drinks, which on the Earth shall bring / Diseases dire' (XI. 472–74). Michael tells Adam that he may avoid the agonizing modes of dying caused by these diseases

if thou well observe
The rule of not too much, by temperance taught,
In what thou eat'st and drink'st, seeking from thence
Due nourishment, not gluttonous delight,
Till many years over thy head return:
So may'st thou live, till like ripe Fruit thou drop
Into thy Mother's lap, or be with ease
Gather'd, not harshly pluckt, for death mature:
This is old age; (XI. 530–38)

This advice, while recommending choice and action in accordance with a rule, highlights the passive dimension of virtuous human existence by way of representing humans as fruit which can only ripen and then fall to the ground, or be gathered or plucked. It also confirms the importance of patience. That patience is now a valuable characteristic of man, one that enables him to suffer his pains and losses as God wishes, is indicated earlier by both God, when he instructs Michael not to dismiss Adam and Eve disconsolate 'If patiently thy bidding they obey' (XI. 112), and Michael, when he counsels Eve 'patiently' to resign what she has lost (XI. 287–88). Adam understands:

Henceforth I fly not Death, nor would prolong
Life much, bent rather how I may be quit
Fairest and easiest of this cumbrous charge,
Which I must keep till my appointed day
Of rend'ring up, and patiently attend
My dissolution. (XI. 547–52)

And it is of course this 'better fortitude / Of Patience and Heroic Martyrdom' — 'unsung' by men who define virtue in terms of military prowess and statesmanship — that Milton claims to sing in his poem (IX. 31–33).

Besides wisdom, temperance, and patience, faith is an important virtue for fallen mankind, not because it qualifies him to be a good citizen, but because it enables him to 'come / To death' and 'mix with' his 'connatural dust' in the manner God wills (XI. 528–29). God asserts the importance of faith when he observes to the Son that 'refin'd / By Faith and faithful works, to Second Life', mankind will be resigned up 'with Heav'n and Earth renew'd' (XI. 63–66). Michael asserts it by explicitly recommending it, celebrating the heroes of faith listed in Hebrews 11,

affirming man's resignation from 'works of Law to works of Faith' (XII. 306), and claiming that the obedience of the Son becomes that of mankind 'by Faith' (XII. 408–09). He makes the point one last time when he tells Adam to reveal to Eve what 'may concern her Faith to know',

That ye may live, which will be many days,
Both in one Faith unanimous though sad,
With cause for evils past, yet much more cheer'd
With meditation on the happy end. (XII. 599–605)

Though he is dependent upon God for renewing his lapsed powers, fallen mankind enjoys a kind of freedom of belief, and faith for him remains a freely chosen belief, one which must be grounded in reason working on the givens of experience and memory. This is in part because, as Michael observes, the conditions of inner freedom for fallen mankind remain the same as they were for unfallen mankind — reason rather than passion must govern the will — and 'virtue [. . .] is reason' (XII. 98). This reason is presumably still that which enables man to be temperate, to control his appetites and desires and the way in which he gratifies them.⁴⁰ As we have seen, however, Michael is somewhat ambivalent concerning the extent to which fallen mankind is capable of ensuring that reason governs appetite. Insofar as he prevents his passion and appetite from displacing reason as governor of the will, he maintains his inner freedom, and insofar as he does this, he is capable of faith, where faith is a freely chosen belief. But whereas for unfallen mankind the object of this belief is an infinitely good and powerful God, for fallen mankind it expands to include the Son as his redeemer, for he proclaims life 'to all who shall believe / In his redemption, and that his obedience / Imputed becomes theirs by Faith, his merits / To save them, not thir own, though legal works' (XII. 407–10).

Though the poem does not, like Paul, present hope as a cardinal virtue of fallen mankind, there are some indications of its importance as well: Adam evades despair and rejects Eve's counsel of sexual abstinence or suicide because he 'To better hopes his more attentive mind / Laboring had rais'd' (X. 1011–12). Suicide and 'wilful barrenness', he continues, are to be rejected because 'That cuts us off from hope, and savors only / Rancor and pride, impatience and despite, / Reluctance against God and his just yoke / Laid on our Necks' (X. 1042–46). That hope is grounded

⁴⁰ Here Milton again departs from his biblical sources, since in the Gospels (at least as they are translated in the King James Version), 'reason' is hardly mentioned. Indeed, 'reasoning' is something the Pharisees, scribes, and lawyers do when they tempt Christ, and something the disciples do when they are confused. See Mark 2. 6–8, 8. 16–17, 11. 31–32, 12. 28; Luke 5. 21–22, 9. 46, 20. 5, 20. 14.

in the consciousness of the promise of the Son's victory over Satan: as Adam exclaims to Michael after learning of the birth of the Son, 'O Prophet of glad tidings, finisher / Of utmost hope!' (XII. 375–76). Remembering the promise, fallen mankind hopes and is thereby enabled to bear God's just yoke properly.

A final important dimension of the virtue of man in relation to his end of suffering in this world is identified by Adam when he says that 'suffering for Truth's sake / Is fortitude to highest victory' (XII. 569–70). While mankind fulfills God's will simply by patiently enduring the suffering that comes with being a fallen human being, there are also individuals who suffer *for* something in particular, namely the truth, testifying to the truth, bearing witness to the truth, uttering 'odious Truth' (XI. 704), and teaching the truth, where the truth is essentially that which is expressed by the Bible, and Milton's poem. Abdiel is an exemplar of one who suffers in this way, as are Enoch, Noah, the apostles, Milton (as he represents himself in the invocations), and the Son himself. Like Christ in the Gospels, Paul, and other apostles such as Peter, Adam and Michael clearly associate this kind of suffering with the end of man in this world. Referring to the particular virtue required for the achievement of that end as 'fortitude', Adam uses the republican vocabulary to mean something different from what the republicans used it to mean: the virtue of fortitude is not that which allows one to fight well, endure the hardships of the military life, serve one's country, and achieve glory, but that which allows one to endure the pain that others inflict upon one for speaking the truths of God and testifying to one's belief in them.

The final books show that besides needing those virtues which enable him to suffer, to live, and to die properly, man also requires some qualities which enable him to perform other works: as God observes to the Son, the life of fallen man is to be 'refin'd / By Faith and faithful works' (XI. 63–64). Michael tells Adam that God has delayed his death so that he may 'repent' and cover 'one bad act with many deeds well done' (XI. 255–57). After having revealed history to him, he exhorts him to 'add / Deeds to thy knowledge answerable' (XII. 581–82). As we saw in the previous chapter, among these deeds are prayer, repentance, and obedience, and in order to perform them properly, mankind needs not just some of those qualities which permit him to suffer well, such as wisdom and faith, but also feelings of humiliation, contrition, and sorrow. This is implied by the description of Adam and Eve praying out of 'sorrow unfeign'd, and humiliation meek' (X. 1092, 1104) immediately after the fall. That man must have a properly disposed heart in order to pray, repent, and obey is confirmed by God's account of how he will soften man's stony heart at the opening of Book III.

Michael's critique of the warlike society produced by the sons of Seth and the daughters of Cain, his affirmation of the God-fearing society that develops immediately after the flood, his critique of Nimrod and Pharoah, and his celebration of Israel and David's 'puissant deeds' (XII. 322) indicate that the deeds and works fallen mankind is to perform, at least for a time, may include things such as fighting, commanding armies, and founding and participating in the governments of a political society. This is one reason that justice has a slightly higher profile in the table of virtues for fallen mankind prior to the first coming than it does for un-fallen mankind: Abel, the sons of Seth, Enoch, Noah, the immediate descendants of Noah, and David are 'just' and speak of justice. But it is important to see that Milton sees some of these just men as isolated individuals who act alone: Enoch is the 'only righteous in a World perverse' and dares 'single to be just' (XI. 701–03), while Noah is the 'One Man' who is not depraved, 'the only Son of light / In a dark Age', 'The one just Man alive', 'one Man found so perfet and so just', and 'one just Man' (XI. 808–09, 818, 876, 890). Emphasizing, indeed celebrating, the singularity of the just man, fiercely asserting the ability of individuals to be just even though their political societies — nay, their worlds — are depraved, Milton sharply distinguishes his just man from the just man of the ancients who is just *with* and in part *as a result of* other just members of his political society. In addition, there is no indication that the life of the soldier, citizen, juror, judge, or statesman has any priority when it comes to the virtuous life. As we will see, this has far-reaching consequences for the standing of various civil liberties in this poem. But this is also one reason why justice is so far from being the primary virtue for the fallen human, even though he or she exists in political societies which are subject to civil laws that are commonly violated, and which are at war with each other. Another reason justice is not the primary virtue for man as we know him is that, at least insofar as justice is understood in terms of that virtue which qualifies one to obey moral and civil laws, it is a quality which man does not need in order to perform the works he is meant to perform once the Son has appeared. For as Michael explains to Adam, man is delivered by the Son from the law, and the works he is to perform are thus not works of law of any kind, but 'works of Faith' (XII. 306). Milton's Christian antinomianism, that is, demands the demotion of republican conceptions of justice in the table of virtues and so distances him from a major tenet of republican ethical thought.⁴¹

⁴¹ For accounts of Milton's antinomianism and its importance in Milton's thought, see Bennett, *Reviving Liberty*, pp. 94–118; Fish, *How Milton Works*, throughout.

In order to perform the works he is made and meant to perform, it is of course faith that is required, and this is why the final books of the poem highlight this virtue rather than justice, even for those who precede the first coming. But love also emerges here as a, if not the, primary virtue in relation to such works. Emerging from his despair and anger towards Eve immediately after the fall, Adam advises,

no more contend, nor blame
Each other, blam'd enough elsewhere, but strive
In offices of Love, how we may light'n
Each other's burden in our share of woe; (X. 958–61)

It is by striving not in military and political offices but in offices of love that Adam and Eve will perform the work of lightening the burden of this life that is proper for them (Milton is here surely again putting the republican vocabulary to uses of his own). Thus, in his final address to Adam, Michael cites not *On Duties* but II Peter and tells him that to his wisdom and deeds he is to add 'Faith, / Add Virtue, Patience, Temperance, add Love, / By name to come call'd Charity, the soul / Of all the rest' (XII. 582–85). Michael does not even mention justice here, much less identify it as the primary virtue, nor does Adam even mention it in his major summation to which Michael here responds. Charity, not justice, is the super-virtue for fallen mankind because, as Paul says in his letter to the Corinthians to which Michael here also alludes, charity 'beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things' (I Cor. 13. 7), and it is mainly by bearing, believing, hoping, and enduring in the right way — and helping others to do so — that fallen mankind exists as God wants him to exist.

For Aristotle, the Romans, and Machiavelli, a man rightly takes pride in those noble deeds which he has performed and which deserve to be honoured and remembered by the world after his death. Indeed, Aristotle treats *megalopsychia*, which Ross and others translate as 'pride', as a virtue, one which allows a man to think of himself as being worthy of great things (but especially honour) and who claims great things for himself in accordance with his merit (*NE* 1123b1–14). Sallust, while confessing some of his shortcomings, proudly celebrates his act of serving the republic by writing history, and Cicero is forever stridently and proudly celebrating his own noble and just deeds in his speeches and philosophical writings. But Milton's epic makes clear that what it calls 'pride' is inappropriate for fallen humans. The point is made in many ways throughout the poem, one of which is simply the presentation of pride as *the* moral attribute of Satan: 'his Pride / Had cast him out from Heav'n' after he and the rebel angels had waged 'Battle proud' (I. 36–43); in Hell he sees the fallen host 'with obdurate pride and steadfast hate' (I. 58); Satan recollects 'his wonted pride' before rousing the fallen angels (I. 527);

surveying them once they have assembled, 'his heart / Distends with pride' (I. 571–72); he stands among them 'proudly eminent' (I. 590); 'considerate Pride / Waiting revenge' appears in his face (I. 603–04); he opens the Stygian Council in Pandemonium by displaying 'His proud imaginations' (II. 10), and he stands to volunteer 'with Monarchal pride / Conscious of highest worth' (II. 428–29); Death describes him as he who first broke peace in Heaven 'and in proud rebellious Arms' drew after him a third of the angels (II. 691); on Niphates's top he remembers how glorious he was 'Till Pride and worse Ambition' threw him down (IV. 40); in Paradise, 'his proud step he scornful turn'd' after he sees Adam and Eve (IV. 536); he goes along with Ithuriel and Zephon 'like a proud Steed rein'd' after being discovered at the ear of Eve (IV. 858); he 'could not bear / Through pride' the sight of God anointing the Son (V. 664–65); Abdiel describes his musings on liberty as 'argument blasphemous, false and proud!' (V. 809); in the north of heaven, he with his angels inhabits 'proud Tow'rs' (V. 907); he is 'the proud / Aspirer' (VI. 89–90); Abdiel assaults his 'proud Crest' (VI. 191); Satan's 'pride' is humbled by Michael in the war in heaven (VI. 341–42); the appearance of 'Power Divine' on the battlefield does nothing to deter Satan and the rebel angels, for no signs avail 'to convince the proud' (VI. 789); their 'proud attempt' was easily defeated by God (VII. 609); after seducing Eve, Satan returns to Pandemonium, the 'City and proud seat / Of *Lucifer*' (X. 424–25).

The point is also made early in the poem by the way in which the narrator compares — or asserts the impossibility of comparing — the achievements of fallen humans with those of Satan and the devils. How unwarranted it would be for the fallen readers of the poem to take pride in any of the armed forces they have ever amassed, for example, since compared to the 'imbodied force' commanded by Satan, all of these human forces taken together would amount to merely 'that small infantry / Warr'd on by Cranes' (I. 574–76). But even this way of perceiving the military forces of fallen humans, the narrator then suggests, fails to capture just how vast the fallen angelic host is, and just how miniscule those human forces are. For, finally, the prowess of devils cannot be understood by way of comparison with mortal prowess: 'Thus far these [the devils] beyond / Compare of mortal prowess' (I. 587–88). That fallen humans have no grounds for thinking highly of and claiming honours for themselves is more explicitly asserted by the narrator when he proceeds to 'compare' fallen human with devilish architecture:

And here let those
Who boast in mortal things, and wond'ring tell
Of *Babel*, and the works of *Memphian* Kings,
Learn how thir greatest monuments of Fame,

And Strength and Art are easily outdone
 By Spirits reprobate, and in an hour
 What in an age they with incessant toil
 And hands innumerable scarce perform. (I. 692–99)

How can fallen humans possibly take pride in anything they do when a bunch of devils, given a little spare time in Hell, can so easily outdo them with so much less effort? Indeed, how can fallen humans not feel ‘shame’ in light of the fact that ‘though under hope / Of heavenly Grace’, they fight amongst themselves, while damned devils ‘Firm concord’ hold with each other (II. 496–502)?

It might be thought that the critique of Satan’s pride and the pride of those who boast in mortal things does not amount to a critique of pride per se, that the problem with this pride is that it is pride taken in the wrong thing, or pride that is simply unjustly taken. But that the critique of pride extends even to pride in what the poem itself defines as merit and righteous acts is clearly indicated on many occasions, one of which is the ‘comparison’ of the fallen host to mortal military forces. The fact that some of these forces — such as those of Charlemagne — fought for a Christian cause does nothing to enhance their magnitude: even when ‘all who since’ the times of King Arthur — ‘Baptiz’d or Infidel’ — are thrown in with the pagan armed forces of ancient times, the result is, in relation to the forces in which Satan takes such pride, a Pygmy infantry (I. 582). We also note that ‘pride’ and ‘proud’ are almost never used in the poem to describe virtues, or virtuous deeds, or virtuous agents. On the very few occasions when these terms are used to describe virtuous agents, it is Satan who does so, as when he responds to what he takes to be Gabriel’s insults by calling him ‘Proud liminary Cherub’ (IV. 971), or sarcastically asks ‘O Friends, why come not on these Victors proud?’ (VI. 609) after he and his crew have laid low the heavenly host with their ‘deep-throated Engines’ (VI. 586). Or, the meaning of ‘pride’ is deeply compromised by an adjective which means its opposite: the narrator describes Eve yielding to Adam with ‘coy submission, modest pride’ (IV. 310). The reasons that *fallen* agents cannot reasonably take pride in and boast of even their righteous deeds are provided by God and the Son on those occasions when they explain fallen mankind’s reliance upon divine grace and the merit of the Son. Thus, before the fall, God observes of Adam that

His crime makes guilty all his Sons, thy merit
 Imputed shall absolve them who renounce
 Thir own both righteous and unrighteous deeds,
 And live in thee transplanted, and from thee
 Receive new life. (III. 290–94)

Rather than celebrating and taking pride in his good deeds — deeds which, unlike Satan's, are *really* good — fallen mankind is to renounce them in order to be absolved. Following the fall, the Son requests God 'all his works on mee / Good or not good [to] ingraft, my Merit those / Shall perfet, and for these my Death shall pay' (XI. 34–36). And as Michael later informs Adam, the Son proclaims life 'to all who shall believe / In his redemption, and that his obedience / Imputed becomes theirs by Faith, his merits / To save them, not thir own, though legal works' (XII. 407–10). Fallen mankind is to renounce his own deeds — good, bad, and indifferent — because, insofar as they are *his*, they are infected with sin. He is to renounce rather than boast of his virtuous deeds out of the acknowledgement that they are truly virtuous only by virtue of the Son's merit, and out of his own belief in the Son as one who, imputing that merit to him and his works, redeems man. It is hard to think of anything that would be more repugnant to Sallust's hero, Marius, or to Cicero's hero, himself.

That justice is not the principal virtue and that man is not to take pride in and demand honours for his righteous deeds clearly distinguishes the ethical teaching of the poem not only from the ethical teachings of the ancients, but also from attitudes that prevail in the prose. In *Of Education* (1644), for example, Milton counsels that, after having studied 'politics', the boys at his school 'are to dive into the grounds of law and legal justice; delivered first and with best warrant by Moses, and as far as human prudence can be trusted, in those extolled remains of Grecian lawgivers, Lycurgus, Solon, Zaleucus, Charondas, and thence to all the Roman edicts and tables with their Justinian: and so down to the Saxon and common laws of England, and the statutes'.⁴² *Areopagitica* (1644) alludes not just to a speech by the ancient Greek orator Isocrates, but also to the celebrated ancient Athenian court by means of which leading Athenian citizens administered justice to other citizens in accordance with their constitution and laws. It is thus not surprising that in this tract Milton recommends that Englishmen do justice to other Englishmen and that they 'confine, imprison, and do sharpest justice' on those books that demean both themselves and men. God, Milton claims, commands us 'temperance, justice, continence, yet pours out before us, even to a profuseness, all desirable things, and gives us minds that can wander beyond all limit and satiety'. And in celebration of his 'vast city', London, Milton claims that there are just as many 'pens and heads [...] sitting by their studious lamps, musing, searching, revolving new notions and ideas wherewith to present, as with their homage and their fealty,

⁴² *Of Education*, p. 636.

the approaching reformation' as there are 'anvils and hammers waking, to fashion out the plates and instruments of armed justice in defense of beleaguered Truth'.⁴³

In *The History of Britain* (1670), Milton praises those kings — such as Ethelbert, Edwin, Ecbert, Alfred, Edward, Athelstan, Edgar, and Edward the Confessor — who, being prudent and just, brought just laws into existence and administered them.⁴⁴ In *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* (1649), he claims that the 'autoritie and power of self-defence and preservation' was 'originally and naturally in every fallen man. But since, being fallen, they found that 'no faith in all was found sufficiently binding' to maintain order in their cities, towns, and commonwealths, they found it necessary 'to ordaine som authoritie, that might restrain by force and punishment what was violated against peace and common right'. They therefore 'communicated' this authority and power to kings or magistrates, 'not to be thir Lords and Maisters [...] but, to be thir Deputies and Commissioners, to execute, by vertue of thir intrusted power, that justice which else every man by the bond of nature and of Cov'nant must have executed for himself, and for one another'. It is, Milton adds, only for the sake of executing this justice that any man can by civil right bear jurisdiction and authority over other free men. In this work, Milton also follows Cicero in celebrating those who, like the English revolutionaries, 'dare execute highest Justice' on those rulers who fail to bear their authority to this end. Such deeds teach lawless kings that 'Justice is the onely true Sovran and supreme Majesty upon earth'. Perhaps revising Aristotle's discussion of particular justice in terms of proportion, Milton here, moreover, justifies the regicide on grounds that 'the ways of justice are exactest proportion; if for one trespass of a King it require so much remedie or satisfaction, then for twenty more as hainous crimes, it requires of him twentyfold; and so proportionably, till it com to what is utmost among men'.⁴⁵

Eikonoklastes (1649), too, is shot through with fierce assertions of 'Justice' as both 'that Impartial and Godlike vertue' of humans and an essential quality of those actions performed by members of political societies in relation to each other. In this tract, Milton also takes a position on the debate that occurred in the court of Darius over 'what thing was to be counted strongest of all other' described by

⁴³ *Areopagitica*, pp. 720, 733, 743.

⁴⁴ *The History of Britain*, pp. 95, 203, 251, 291–92, 303, 314, 321–22, 392.

⁴⁵ *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, pp. 8–9, 33, 44. For Milton's Ciceronian justification of the right to punish and execute justice on tyrants in the *Tenure*, see Martin Dzelzainis, 'Antimonarchism in English Republicanism', in *Republicanism and Constitutionalism in Early Modern Europe*, pp. 27–41 (p. 41); Dzelzainis, 'Introduction', *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, pp. xv–xvii.

Esdras and Josephus. Choosing between the power of kings, women, wine, truth, and justice, Milton writes, 'Truth is properly no more then Contemplation, and her utmost efficiency is but teaching; but Justice in her very essence is all strength and activity; and hath a Sword put into her hand, to use against all violence and oppression on the earth'. 'Justice, above all other things', Milton claims, 'is and ought to be the strongest: Shee is the strength, the Kingdom, the power and majestie of all Ages'. One of his principal aims in this tract is thus to move his countrymen 'to acknowledge the strength and supremacie of Justice'.⁴⁶ In *A Defence of the People of England* (1651), Milton continues to praise and celebrate acts of vengeance, punishment, prosecution, and execution such as those performed by the English people, acts that 'made famous not only laws and jurisdiction which were restored henceforth to mortals on a fair basis, but justice itself, and rendered her more glorious henceforth and greater than before, after this famous judgment'.⁴⁷ In the *Second Defence of the English People* (1654), he recalls how he lately 'defended deeds of supreme courage and justice' and again praises his heroes, such as John Bradshaw (the lawyer who presided over the trial of Charles I) and Cromwell, for, among other things, their justice. Addressing his 'fellow countrymen' at the conclusion of the tract, Milton insists that they will be able to maintain their liberty only if it is grounded in 'piety, justice, temperance, in short, true virtue', and only if they realize that the most important and useful thing to the state is 'to administer incorrupt justice to the people, to help those cruelly harassed and oppressed, and to render to everyman promptly his own deserts'.⁴⁸ Finally, in *The Ready and Easy Way* (1660), Milton again celebrates these deeds and laments that for him and his countrymen to return to the 'thralldom of kingship' after having performed them would amount to being 'ourselves the slanderers of our own just and religious deeds'. He envisions and recommends, moreover, a commonwealth consisting of counties in which the 'the nobility and chief gentry' would 'bear part in the government, make their own judicial laws, or use these that are, and execute them by their own elected judicatures and judges without appeal, in all things of civil government between man and man. So they shall have justice in their own hands, law executed fully and finally in their own counties and precincts'.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ *Eikonoklastes*, pp. 346, 582–85.

⁴⁷ *A Defence of the People of England*, p. 70.

⁴⁸ *Second Defence of the English People*, pp. 508, 638, 642, 671–75, 680–81.

⁴⁹ *The Ready and Easy Way*, pp. 883, 896. For further observations on Milton's preoccupation with justice in the prose, see Lim, *John Milton, Radical Politics, and Biblical Republicanism*, pp.

Rather than celebrating statesmen who legislate wisely and administer justice to the people, and citizens who proudly wield the sword of justice against unjust rulers, as he does in these tracts, Milton in the final books of his epic poem directs humans to respond to injustice by bearing witness against it, dealing charitably with its victims, and opposing it by being meek and suffering for Truth's sake.⁵⁰ In this poem, Milton is much more concerned to show that God is just than he is to reaffirm the ancient republican view of justice as the cardinal virtue of mankind. This is in part because, on this occasion, his principal aim is to justify the ways of God to men, and he believes that showing God is — unlike many of the gods of pagan epic — just is one of the most effective means of achieving this aim.

* * *

In order to live this life of virtue, the fallen human does not need to live in a political society in which a class of slaves or labourers provides the necessities and thereby spares citizens from the manual labour which is inimical to the life of virtue. On the contrary, we see that Abel is virtuous even though he is a labourer providing himself with necessities, and that 'This second source of Men, while yet but few' lead their lives 'With some regard to what is just and right' and even 'spend thir days in joy unblam'd', all the while 'Laboring the soil, and reaping plenteous crop, / Corn, wine and oil' (XII. 13–22). Indeed, manual labour could hardly be inimical to the life of virtue since, after all, God's general command to fallen man is that he be sent 'from the Garden forth to Till / The Ground whence he was taken, fitter soil' (XI. 97–98). In addition, though after the fall humans display an inclination to form political societies as Milton says they do in some of the political prose,⁵¹ they do not need to be members of one in order to exercise their virtue. The cases of Noah, Enoch, and Milton himself show that one can be virtuous even though one is 'single' and 'alone', something that is impossible on the Aristotelian and Ciceronian scheme of things. Nor does fallen mankind, in order

60–68; Worden, *Literature and Politics in Cromwellian England*, pp. 178–79. The passages cited above show that it is not the case, as Worden claims, that in the tracts of 1649, 'the justice enacted by the regicide [...] has nothing to do with man-made laws' (p. 179). In these tracts, Milton affirms the justice of the regicide on grounds that it was consistent with God's will, it was consistent with the natural right principles which should regulate all man-made law, and it was consistent with English law (which conforms with those principles).

⁵⁰ I find support for this view in John R. Knott, Jr, "Suffering for Truth's sake": Milton and Martyrdom', in *Politics, Poetics, and Hermeneutics in Milton's Prose*, ed. by Loewenstein and Turner, pp. 153–70.

⁵¹ See *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, pp. 8–9.

to achieve his end in this world, need a political society that sings its praises and establishes its renown, for those things are not part of man's end, even when their lives do merit fame.

There are some indications that, like the unfallen individual, the fallen individual needs a mate in order for him or her to fulfill God's will for mankind, even though that will has changed in fundamental respects. Willing that justice live, God wills that fallen man 'with his whole posterity' pay the penalty and die (III. 209), but he also wills that the seed of Eve shall bruise the serpent's head. In order for this to occur, there must be a posterity, and in order for that to happen, Adam and Eve must reject Eve's counsel to remain 'childless'. They might bear children and then separate, but Michael, Eve, and Adam all know that for these purposes, and for the purposes of paying the penalty and performing the offices of love, Adam and Eve are to stay together, 'in one Faith unanimous though sad', for their entire lives (XII. 603, XI. 175–77, 290–91).

But God commands some, not all, to know 'the Rites / Mysterious of connubial Love' (IV. 742–47), and it is notable that the sons of Seth seem to be getting on quite well with their religious lives before they marry the daughters of Cain. And Milton's account of Enoch in the final books enforces a notion of the virtuous fallen human being as one who stands alone and testifies against the world to his faith in God. So while the fallen human species is under the command to procreate, individual fallen humans are not; nor are they intended by God to be happy and to delight in their existence. They may thus achieve their ends in this world while remaining 'single' and 'alone'. If, however, charity is essential to the Christian life of virtue, and if charity is something one exercises and feels towards other humans, then one still stands in need of some other human beings in order to exercise virtue. These others need not be members of one's own political community. But, in order for at least some forms of charity to exist, they do need to be members of one's family, for it is only through 'wedded Love' that 'all the Charities / Of Father, Son, and Brother first were known' (IV. 750–57), and it is within the context of their own wedded love that Adam and Eve will fulfill the offices of charity. Insofar as charity begins at home, it is the family, not the political society, that is a precondition for the virtuous life of fallen man.⁵²

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⁵² For a discussion of the final books which highlights both the importance of family to the virtuous life for fallen mankind and the difference Milton draws between the family and political society, see Murphy, 'Milton's "Birth Abortive"'.

So much less depends on the ethical quality of fallen humans than depended upon the ethical quality of unfallen humans: neither the condition of human nature, nor the fate of the species, nor the state of the universe depends upon how any particular fallen human lives. A fallen individual's virtuous life does, however, have significance for that individual, but it derives neither from its being constitutive of his or her happiness in this world, nor from its moving others to praise and celebrate it in public. It derives, first, from the way in which it alters that individual's condition in this world. As God says, fallen man will be 'refin'd / By Faith and faithful works, to second Life' (XI. 63–64); as Michael says, the value of the life of moderation resides in the fact that it will leave Adam 'best prepar'd' to 'endure' death. The final books emphasize, that is, the way in which the virtuous life is of value to fallen individuals for the way in which it permits them to cultivate within themselves the proper stance and attitude towards their earthly existence and demise. In addition, the value and significance of a fallen individual's virtuous life to that individual derives from the 'reward' he or she will receive as a result of it and the avoidance of the 'punishment' reserved by God for those who fail to live that life (XI. 709–10, XII. 461). The reward is what God refers to as 'second Life' (XI. 64), a state of bliss, descriptions, promises, and celebrations of which punctuate the entire narrative; the punishment is eternal pain in hell. Those rewards and punishments will be meted out by the Son in accordance with his assessment of the moral quality of all individuals' lives at the end of time. A kind of community and corporation, a oneness with the Son (XI. 44), will be formed by these virtuous fallen humans in their second lives, but it is not as though they live their lives *for the sake of* the good of that community. They live for the sake of God and the salvation of their souls, and they enjoy community with God and the Son as a result of living in this way.

The ethical standing of a fallen individual who is a member of a particular society may also be of considerable value and significance to other members of that society: the virtues of the immediate descendants of Noah permit them to live for a 'Long time in peace by Families and Tribes / Under paternal rule' (XII. 23–24); the virtue of the other patriarchs has a beneficial effect upon the people of Israel; Nimrod's corruption causes pain and suffering to those subject to his empire. But as for unfallen mankind, so for fallen mankind: it is not the case that in the virtue of each member of a society the virtue of all members is always and profoundly involved. For the fact that your entire society is corrupt does not mean you cannot be virtuous as Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Milton himself were. Thus, whereas for the ancients being just involves acting with and for the sake of others who are under the same civil law, the fallen Christian may dare 'single to be just'. And the

fact that the corrupt authorities are persecuting you in particular does not mean you cannot continue to hope and exercise fortitude by suffering for truth's sake. While the moral quality of those in your political society may profoundly affect the conditions of your life, it thus does not necessarily determine your own moral quality. And the fact that you are corrupt does not necessarily mean that your fellow citizens will face an obstacle in their efforts to be virtuous, as it does in the ancient *polis*.

It is also important to see that a fallen individual's living the Christian life may have a particular value or significance for other individuals who are external to that individual's political society. Since the virtuous life for fallen mankind is not lived mainly for the sake of that individual's political society (and his own glory) but for the sake of God, the salvation of his own soul, and the good of mankind, it may well include acts of charity towards all mankind and acts of preaching to members of all political societies, acts such as those performed by the apostles. An individual's virtue may hence be of tremendous importance to other individuals, no matter who or where those individuals may be: it may diminish their suffering; it may provide them with an example which helps them bear and endure that suffering (as Enoch's life did); it may reveal to them the word of God; it may even lead them to a saving belief in the Son and the reward of the second life. Such a value is of an entirely different order from whatever value the virtuous life of a citizen of Athens, Sparta, or Rome might have for a barbarian.

Since supernatural agents continue to have various investments in man, the ethical quality of human life continues to affect them significantly: the first prayers of fallen man, mixed by the Son with incense, are 'Fruits of more pleasing savor' (XI. 26) to God than those cultivated by man in paradise, and such prayer will presumably continue to please God over the course of human history. And he in fact dwells with the people of Israel once he has established their rites and laws, 'such delight hath God in Men / Obedient to his will' (XII. 245–46). On the other hand, Michael describes how God wearies of and becomes incensed with man's iniquities and idolatries (XII. 106–07, 335–39). And, as we will see in Chapter 5, human behaviour often provokes God to intervene in human history in various ways. God, the Son, and the angels also take some degree of pleasure in fallen man living what for him is the virtuous life and experience various states of displeasure when he falls short of it, while Satan and the devils take the pleasures of vengeance when they witness God's fallen creature behaving badly.

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Just as Milton's table of virtues for mankind as we know it differs profoundly from those of the ancients and Machiavelli, so does his understanding of how virtue is

inculcated in humans. The primary source of virtue in mankind as we know it is God, though it is not clear exactly how God renews man's lapsed powers and how man receives God's grace. In Book XII, God is further described as one who inculcates some of the Christian virtues by way of his judgements and punishments: Noah and his immediate descendants live 'With some regard to what is just and right' as long as 'the dread of judgment past remains / Fresh in thir minds, fearing the Deity' (XII. 14–17). The basic idea that fear (of God or of an enemy) can instill virtue would certainly make sense to Sallust and Machiavelli. But it is notable that Michael does not proceed to present a Machiavellian interpretation of Moses as a great innovator who founds a new legal and constitutional order within which a new civic virtue develops. He presents the Christian interpretation of him as one whose importance lies in his being the medium through which God informs them of sin and salvation: through Moses, God creates laws appertaining to both 'civil Justice' and 'religious Rites' (XII. 231) for the Israelites in order 'to evince / Thir natural pravity' (XII. 287–88) and to inform them 'by types / And shadows, of that destin'd Seed to bruise / The Serpent' (XII. 232–34). And rather than providing anything remotely resembling the ancient pagan and Machiavellian understanding of drills and training as sources of virtue, Michael describes how the people of Israel become aware that the God-given law can discover but not remove sin, and are thereby 'disciplin'd' from the old to the new covenants. Milton thus does not, as Aristotle, the Romans, and Machiavelli do, identify the wise legislator and the effective enforcement of the civil laws he brings into existence as major ways of instilling virtue in men. Indeed, Michael's antinomianism here marks a sharp departure from one of the major aspects of the republicans' understanding of virtue and of the means, aims, and importance of politics at large.

The Son, too, is deeply involved in the development of virtue in fallen man, for it is he who clothes fallen man's 'inward nakedness' that is opprobrious to God 'with his Robe of righteousness' (X. 221–22). And it is the righteousness and obedience of the Son that is 'imputed' to man, though this can only occur if man has faith in him (XII. 294–95, 408–09). The Son, moreover, cures the wounds Satan inflicts on man, 'Not by destroying *Satan*, but his works / In thee and in thy Seed' (XII. 394–95). And it is the Son who, after his first coming, will send a Comforter

who shall dwell
His Spirit within them, and the Law of Faith
Working through love, upon thir hearts shall write,
To guide them in all truth, and also arm
With spiritual Armor, able to resist
Satan's assaults, and quench his fiery darts. (XII. 487–92)

He will, in addition, pour 'the Spirit' on the apostles and on 'all / Baptiz'd' in such a way that they will be endowed 'with wondrous gifts' (XII. 497–500). Working directly on the very being of man, the Son is thus responsible for several of the qualities man requires in order to fulfill God's will for him.

Though entirely dependent upon God and the Son for some dimensions of his virtue, fallen man is yet in some important ways himself responsible for its existence and cultivation. First of all, we have seen that since his own fallen nature in some ways qualifies him for the suffering and death God wills him to experience, there is a sense in which fallen mankind is by nature virtuous. Secondly, if man is to choose to accept grace when God offers it to him, then his having grace and all that depends upon it depends upon his own choice. And if man is to pray, repent, and obey in order to be given grace and all that depends upon it, then his own acts of prayer, repentance, and obedience are involved in the development of virtue within him. Thirdly, we have seen that man may develop the virtues of patience, hope, and fortitude in himself by living in a certain way: by moderating his passions, by tempering joy with fear and sorrow over time, man will become 'inur'd' to bear whatever may befall him and prepare himself for death, as the angels become 'inur'd' to obeying God by obeying him. Through exercising temperance, that is, mankind cultivates the proper attitude and stance towards his own suffering and death.

There are, in addition, some indications that mankind may acquire virtue through experience and forms of human preaching and instruction. After describing the first coming of the Son, Michael tells Adam how the Son leaves his disciples 'in charge / To teach all nations what of him they learn'd / And his Salvation' (XII. 439–41). 'All Nations they shall teach' (XII. 446), and they do indeed 'win / Great numbers of each Nation to receive / With joy the tidings brought from Heav'n' (XII. 502–04). Having performed their 'Ministry', they leave behind them a written record of 'Thir doctrine and thir story' which contains 'the truth' (XII. 505–06, 511). By reading this record, fallen humans may cultivate the virtues of wisdom and faith, though that record is 'not but by the Spirit understood' (XII. 514). Reading scripture and listening to apostles and ministers preach are thus presented in the final books as significant means by which fallen humans may cultivate virtue within themselves. The final books, moreover, stage the education of Adam in Christian virtue, and, as many have argued, Milton himself aims at educating his readers in these virtues by way of his entire poem.⁵³

⁵³ For a survey of the scholarship that forwards this view, see Jameela Lares, *Milton and the Preaching Arts* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2001), pp. 141–68, 258–65.

This vision of the human role in the production and development of virtue, however, obviously differs profoundly from the visions of human moral development in the ancients and Machiavelli. It also sharply differs from Milton's own consideration of the issue in the prose. In *The Reason of Church Government Urged Against Prelaty* (1642), for example, Milton begins by approvingly citing the *Laws* where Plato urges that 'persuasion' and 'true eloquence' are effective and 'manlike' ways of inculcating the love of goodness out of which people will happily obey just civil laws.⁵⁴ In *Of Education*, a tract which is a major exhibit in Dzelzainis's case for 'Milton's classical republicanism',⁵⁵ Milton calls for 'an institution of breeding' within which boys from twelve to twenty-one would be subjected to a regime of study, exercise, and diet. This institution would be aimed at not just repairing 'the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright' but also inculcating the virtues required to be 'brave men and worthy patriots, dear to God and famous to all ages', soldiers, military commanders, orators, and pillars of state who can 'perform justly, skillfully, and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war'.⁵⁶ As Eric Nelson has recently argued, *Areopagitica* participates in an Isocratean tradition defined by 'the conviction that government should indeed oversee morals, but through education rather than legislation'.⁵⁷ The commonwealth envisioned by Milton in *The Ready and Easy Way* has 'schools and academies' in which children are 'bred up [...] to all learning and noble education — not in grammar only, but in all liberal arts and exercises'. Having recommended this school of virtue, and a commonwealth within which it would exist, Milton at the end of this tract claims 'I trust I shall have spoken persuasion to abundance of sensible and ingenuous men'.⁵⁸

In Book VI of *The History of Britain*, Milton describes how, at the end of the tenth century, under the 'slothfull King' Ethelred, England failed to fend off the invading Danes. His explanation of this failure is consistent with the Sallustian/Machiavellian view that virtue in soldiers is the product of virtuous commanders and discipline:

⁵⁴ *The Reason of Church Government*, p. 640.

⁵⁵ Dzelzainis, 'Milton's Classical Republicanism', p. 14.

⁵⁶ *Of Education*, pp. 637, 631–33.

⁵⁷ Eric Nelson, "'True Liberty': Isocrates and Milton's *Areopagitica*", *Milton Studies*, 40 (2002), 201–21 (p. 221).

⁵⁸ *The Ready and Easy Way*, pp. 897–98.

by the English many resolutions were tak'n, many Armies rais'd, but either betray'd by the falshood, or discourag'd by the weakness of thir Leaders, they were put to rout, or disbanded themselves. For Souldiers most commonly are as thir Commanders, without much odds of valour in one Nation or other, only as they are more or less wisely disciplin'd and conducted.⁵⁹

In the *Digression* from this work, however, Milton observes that, all in all, the ethical problem with the British is not a deficiency in courage and valour, but a deficiency in civil virtue — this in spite of the fact that, as Milton observes in Book II of the *History*, the Romans 'beate us into some civilitie'.⁶⁰ Machiavelli would also have approved of the solution Milton proposes for this problem: considering how 'a land fruitful enough of men stout and courageous in warr' but 'not over fertil of men able to govern justlie & prudently in peace' may attain 'civilitie, prudence, [and] love of the public more then of money or vaine honour', he observes that these virtues 'grow not here but in minds well implanted with solid & elaborate breeding'. It follows, he claims, that 'as wine and oyle are imported to us from abroad, so must ripe understanding and many civil vertues bee imported into our minds from forren writings & examples of best ages'. Only if Britain had been governed by men who were properly educated, 'men more then vulgar, bred up, as few of them were, in the knowledge of Antient and illustrious deeds', might the nation during the 1640s have avoided the 'confusion' that the 'Britans' experienced when, in the fifth century, Rome left them to themselves.⁶¹

In *Paradise Lost*, there is little trace of these commitments to a classically informed vision of *paideia*. The poem does not present virtue as something that does or ought to develop in fallen humans as a result of their existing within specific institutions, such as families, schools, academies, and armies, or being subject and

⁵⁹ *The History of Britain*, p. 337.

⁶⁰ *The History of Britain*, p. 61.

⁶¹ 'MS Digression', in *The History of Britain*, p. 451. According to von Maltzahn, the digression, which was excised from issues of the first edition of the *History* (which appeared in 1670 and 1671), was probably composed in early 1649 and was intended to appear in Book III of the *History*. Austin Woolrych dates its composition just prior to the Restoration, while Worden favours a post-Restoration composition date. An abbreviated version of it was published in 1681 as a separate twelve-page pamphlet entitled *Mr John Miltons Character of the Long Parliament and Assembly of Divines*. For further details about it, and problems related to dating its composition and placing it in the *History*, see von Maltzahn, *Milton's 'History of Britain'*; French Fogle, 'Preface and Notes', in *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, ed. by Don M. Wolfe and others (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953–82), v (1971), 405–37; Worden, *Literature and Politics in Cromwellian England*, pp. 410–26.

obedient to law and discipline, or being brought up in accordance with the *mos maiorum* of particular societies. Indeed, the heroes of the poem are commonly virtuous *in spite of* the cultures, societies, and ways of life in which they are raised: Abraham, for example, is 'Bred up in Idol-worship' (XII. 115) yet becomes a paragon of Christian virtue. Moreover, the poem dramatizes the failure of the orator to educate people to virtue: though Michael asserts that the apostles teach others by speaking to them, he graphically represents how, like those of Abdiel, the persuasive efforts of both Noah and Enoch are 'all in vain' (XI. 726). And the final books neither describe nor envision the Church as an effective school of Christian virtue; on the contrary, the Christian Church, as it actually exists, is seen as a corrupt institution which persecutes on grounds of its false presumption to infallibility 'against Faith and Conscience' (XII. 529). Neither, it should be added, does the poem show any humans becoming virtuous and pure as Milton says they do in *Areopagitica*: by exercising their 'liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience'.⁶² The terse account of human history from the time of the apostles onwards is also hardly optimistic concerning the possibilities of educating fallen man in virtue:

so shall the World go on,
To good malignant, to bad men benign,
Under her own weight groaning, till the day
Appear of respiration to the just. (XII. 537–40)

It thus is not the case, as Lewalski and others claim, that the poem conforms with the optimistic national and nationalist educational agenda of the prose tracts of the 1640s and 1650s.⁶³ For the purposes of this poem, Milton has pretty much abandoned his earlier projects to educate others in civic virtue by way of civil law, oratory, and state schooling, projects which were strongly informed by the educational thought of the republicans.

⁶² *Areopagitica*, p. 746.

⁶³ Lewalski, 'Paradise Lost and Milton's Politics', p. 143. See also Dittler Schulman, 'Paradise Lost' and the Rise of the American Republic, pp. 51–96. But for observations on how the final books of the poem 'show Milton's loss of faith in education', see Achsah Guibbory, *The Map of Time: Seventeenth-Century English Literature and Ideas of Pattern in History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), p. 195.

FORMS OF GOVERNMENT

But it is the custom of bad men and Hypocrits to take advantage at the least abuse of good things, that under that cover they may remove the goodness of those things, rather than the abuse.

Milton, *Eikonoklastes*

Republican Tradition

The term ‘republic’ is now commonly used to mean a political society that is governed not by a monarch but by members of that society who are elected to offices for limited terms. Quentin Skinner respects this common usage when, on several occasions, he uses the term ‘republican’ to refer to a tradition of thought the members of which repudiate monarchy and endorse government by popularly elected citizens. In an early version of an essay on negative liberty and Machiavelli’s reformulation of ‘classical republicanism’, for instance, he claims that though Machiavelli thinks it is at least possible in theory for a community to enjoy a free way of life under monarchy, Machiavelli ‘generally’ sees the common good being properly served only in republics, where a republic is a non-monarchical regime that is elected by the people. Skinner concludes that the postulate that ‘personal liberty can only be fully assured within a self-governing form of republican community [...] represents the heart and nerve of all classical republican theories of citizenship’. In a later essay, ‘The Republican Ideal of Political Liberty’, he claims that authors such as Sallust, Livy, Cicero, and Machiavelli constitute a ‘separate school of thought’ because they ‘generally conclude’ that if we wish to establish a *res publica* — where a *res publica* is a government that reflects the will and promotes the liberty of each citizen and the good of the community as a whole — ‘it will be best to set up a republic as opposed to any kind of principality or monarchical rule’. It is on grounds of this definition of ‘republicanism’ in

terms of a commitment to non-monarchical forms of government that Skinner has more recently argued that the supporters of the 'Commonwealth' that was established in 1649, including Milton, do not qualify as republicans: observing that many of these writers are not 'republicans in the strict sense of repudiating the institution of monarchy', Skinner stresses that it is inappropriate to use the term 'republican' to designate the theory of liberty they espouse. Observing ways in which they are indebted to ancient Roman thinking, he thus now refers to this theory as 'neo-Roman'.¹

This understanding of republicanism in terms of the repudiation and affirmation of particular forms of government would exclude from the republican camp not just the English revolutionaries but all of the 'republicans' we have been considering. Aristotle, for example, does not condemn monarchy and affirm only those forms of government in which elected magistrates hold power for limited tenures. On the contrary, in Book III of the *Politics*, where he explicitly considers the forms of government, Aristotle powerfully affirms the monarchical form of government as one which is suitable to a political society (*polis*), where a political society is a partnership of free men living together with the aim of achieving happiness (*eudaimonia*). He begins with the principle that 'governments which have a regard to the common interest are constituted in accordance with strict principles of justice, and are therefore true forms; but those which regard only the interest of the rulers are all defective and perverted forms, for they are despotic, whereas a state is a community of free men' (*P* 1279a17–21). Aristotle then defines the three true forms of government:

the government, which is the supreme authority in states, must be in the hands of one, or of a few, or of the many. The true forms of government, therefore, are those in which the one, or the few, or the many, govern with a view to the common interest; but governments which rule with a view to the private interest, whether of the one, or of the few, or of the many, are perversions. For the members of a state, if they are truly citizens, ought to participate in its advantages. Of forms of government in which one rules, we call that which regards the common interests, kingship or royalty; that in which more than one, but not many, rule, aristocracy; and it is so called, either because the rulers are the best men, or

¹ See Skinner, 'Idea of Negative Liberty', pp. 207–08; Skinner, 'Republican Ideal of Political Liberty', pp. 302–03. See also Skinner, 'The State', in *Political Innovation and Conceptual Change*, ed. by Terence Ball, James Farr, Russell L. Hanson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 90–131 (p. 105); Skinner, 'Machiavelli's *Discorsi* and the Pre-humanist Origins of Republican Ideas', in *Machiavelli and Republicanism*, pp. 131–41. For Skinner's exclusion of the English radicals from the republican camp, see *Liberty Before Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 22–23, 53–57.

because they have at heart the best interests of the state and of the citizens. But when the citizens at large administer the state for the common interest, the government is called by the generic name — a constitution. (*P* 1279a26–39; these categories with minor changes are reasserted in *NE* 1160a31–1160b22)²

Though Aristotle sometimes uses the term ‘monarchy’ to refer simply to the rule of the one, he here *defines* monarchy as a form of government which has regard for the common interest and which is just; kings are thus by definition men who rule with regard for the common interest and therefore justly (see also *P* 1311a1–7). As he puts it in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, ‘a man is not a king unless he is sufficient to himself and excels his subjects in all good things; and such a man needs nothing further; therefore he will not look to his own interests but to those of his subjects; for a king who is not like that would be a mere titular king’ (1160b3–7). One who rules alone with a view to his own interest thus cannot be a king and his government cannot constitute what Aristotle calls ‘a true form of government’; he is a perverted king, and his government is properly called ‘tyranny’, for ‘tyranny is a kind of monarchy which has in view the interest of the monarch only’ (*P* 1279b6–7). Because monarchy is *by definition* a form of government that aims at the well-being of all citizens, it can be a ‘true form’ of government for communities of free men living together in a partnership aimed at well-being.

Aristotle also asserts that, under some circumstances, monarchy is in fact superior to the other forms. This derives from his commitment to the principles that ‘the good man has a right to rule because he is better’ and that ‘where men are alike and equal, it is neither expedient nor just that one man should be lord of all’ (*P* 1287b12, 1288a1–2; see also 1325b7–10). On the basis of these principles, Aristotle claims that ‘justice will not be done to the superior, if he is reckoned only as the equal of those who are so far inferior to him in virtue and in political capacity’ (*P* 1284a7–10). Such a man ‘ought not to be a subject — that would be as if mankind should claim to rule over Zeus, dividing his offices among them. The only alternative is that all should joyfully obey such a ruler, according to what seems to be the order of nature, and that men like him should be kings in their state for life’ (*P* 1284b30–34) (here a king seems to be merely a single person who holds power; the person who deserves to be king is the man of pre-eminent virtue). Though Aristotle complicates his account by identifying different kinds of monarchy, and discussing ‘the principal controversies relating to monarchy’ (*P* 1287b36), he

² James Blythe identifies Hippodamus, Herodotus, and Plato as Aristotle’s major precedents for these classifications, in *Ideal Government and the Mixed Constitution in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), pp. 13–17.

reasserts his definition of 'kings' as those who 'rule according to law over voluntary subjects' (*P* 1285a27–28). He concludes Book III by stating that 'a people who are by nature capable of producing a race superior in the virtue needed for political rule are fitted for kingly government' (*P* 1288a7–9). He also reaffirms his view of the political authority that is proper for those who happen to be pre-eminent in virtue: 'when a whole family, or some individual, happens to be so pre-eminent in virtue as to surpass all others, then it is just that they should be the royal family and supreme over all, or that this one citizen should be king of the whole nation' (*P* 1288a15–19).

Finally, not only does Aristotle identify monarchy as a true form of government and as a form of government which is the best in some situations, but he also suggests that monarchy may be the 'best in the abstract' (*P* 1288b27). In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, after identifying the three true constitutions, Aristotle claims that 'the best of these is monarchy' (1160a35–36). And though it is commonly observed that in Books VII and VIII of the *Politics* Aristotle presents the 'best form of government' as some kind of non-monarchical government in which all citizens, being of equal virtue, rule and are ruled (1332a33), some scholars have observed that earlier in this work he identifies the best form of government in a different way. At the end of Book III, Aristotle indicates that monarchy and aristocracy are the best:

We showed at the commencement of our inquiry that the virtue of the good man is necessarily the same as the virtue of the citizen of the perfect state. Clearly then in the same manner, and by the same means through which a man becomes truly good, he will frame a state that is to be ruled by an aristocracy or by a king, and the same education and the same habits will be found to make a good man and a man fit to be a statesman or king. (*P* 1288a38–1288b3)

Aristotle appears to confirm this suggestion at the beginning of Book IV: 'of kingly rule and of aristocracy we have already spoken, for the inquiry into the perfect state is the same thing with the discussion of the two forms thus named, since both imply a principle of virtue provided with external means' (*P* 1289a30–33). As a true form of government, monarchy, it seems, is not just the best 'relatively to circumstances' of a particular kind (*P* 1288b28), but may even be the best 'in the abstract'.³

³ For a recognition of this fact, and some of the problems it causes, see William Fortenbaugh, 'Aristotle on Prior and Posterior, Correct and Mistaken Constitutions', in *Companion to Aristotle's Politics*, ed. by Keyt and Miller, pp. 226–37 (p. 235); Thomas Lindsay, 'The "God-like Man" versus the "Best Laws": Politics and Religion in Aristotle's *Politics*', *Review of Politics*, 53 (1991),

This is not to say that Aristotle has no reservations concerning monarchy. He regards tyranny, the 'perversion of the first and most divine' form (monarchy), as being worse than the perversions of aristocracy and polity and therefore as 'the worst of governments' (*P* 1289a40–1289b3; *NE* 1160b8–10). He sometimes speaks as though monarchy is not feasible 'in our own day' when 'men are more upon an equality' (*P* 1313a7–8). And as Ronald Polansky and others have observed, as a form of government under which the people do not participate in rule, monarchy would appear to conflict with Aristotle's commitment to the life of citizenship which includes participating in ruling and administering justice.⁴ But these reservations and problems hardly nullify Aristotle's powerful affirmation of monarchy as a true form of government which in some situations will be the best and which may even be the best in principle.

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In Book VI of his *Histories*, the second-century BC Greek historian Polybius claims that in the earliest stages of human societies, as in the societies of other animals, the rule of the strongest and most courageous individual — a kind of rule he refers to as 'monarchy' — is natural. 'But when in time feelings of sociability and companionship begin to grow in such gatherings of men, then kingship has struck root; and the notions of goodness, justice, and their opposites begin to arise in men' (*His* VI. 5.10).⁵ That is to say that Polybius understands the very notions of justice and

488–509; Blythe, *Ideal Government and the Mixed Constitution*, pp. 18–24; Miller, *Nature, Justice, and Rights in Aristotle's 'Politics'*, pp. 156, 234–39; Liz Anne Alexander, 'The Best Regimes of Aristotle's *Politics*', *History of Political Thought*, 21 (2000), 189–216; Kraut, *Aristotle: Political Philosophy*, pp. 357–61. For the view that even the best regime of the final books is the monarchy affirmed in Books III and IV, see Vander Waerdt, 'Kingship and Philosophy in Aristotle's Best Regime', and Mulgan, 'Aristotle and the Value of Political Participation'.

⁴ Ronald Polansky, 'Aristotle on Political Change', in *Companion to Aristotle's 'Politics'*, ed. by Keyt and Miller, pp. 323–45 (p. 341). See also Mulgan, 'Aristotle and the Value of Political Participation'.

⁵ Polybius is perhaps relying on Aristotle who also presents an account of how each of the true forms of government is prone to pass over into its perverted form (*NE* 1160b9–22). However, at the end of Book V of the *Politics*, Aristotle argues against the aristocracy, timocracy, oligarchy, democracy, tyranny sequence presented by Socrates in Book VIII of the *Republic* and claims that though 'governments more often take an opposite form than one akin to them', they may and do in fact change into any of the other forms (*P* 1316a1–1316b27). On Polybius's knowledge of Aristotle's works, see Richard Shute, *On the History of the Process by Which the Aristotelian Writings Arrived at their Present Form* (1888; repr. New York: Arno Press, 1976), pp. 39–45. On other possible sources for his theory of constitutional change, see Frank Walbank, *Polybius* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972; repr. 1990), pp. 135–42; David Hahm, 'Polybius' Applied

duty to arise in a people as a result of their being subject to the rule of the single person amongst them who is the strongest and most courageous. This occurs because, unlike the animals, humans can use their reason to observe that a monarch — one who is the strongest and most courageous and who rules them — may rule them in a way that is reasonable and advantageous to them: ‘thus is formed naturally among men the first notion of goodness and justice, and their opposites; this is the beginning and birth of true kingship’ (*His* VI. 7.1–2). Polybius thus takes on board the definition of kingship (which he sometimes distinguishes from monarchy), as well as the two other true forms of government, and the three perverted forms that correspond to them provided by ‘Plato and certain other philosophers’ (*His* VI. 5.1–2). But he provides a more systematic account than they do of how, over time, each form leads to another. Before providing the details, he gives the following sketch of the *anakuklōsis politeiōn*, ‘the cycle of political revolution, the course appointed by nature in which constitutions change, disappear, and finally return to the point from which they started’ (*His* VI. 9.10):

Now the first of these to come into being is monarchy, its growth being natural and unaided; and next arises kingship derived from monarchy by the aid of art and by the correction of defects. Monarchy first changes into its vicious allied form, tyranny; and next, the abolishment of both gives birth to aristocracy. Aristocracy by its very nature degenerates into oligarchy; and when the commons inflamed by anger take vengeance on this government for its unjust rule, democracy comes into being; and in due course the licence and lawlessness of this form of government produces mob-rule to complete the series. (*His* VI. 4.7–11)

Given this way in which, due to the ‘the corrupt form which is proper to [...] and naturally follows on’ each true form of government (*His* VI. 10.2–3), each degenerates into its corrupt form, there is little to choose between them. Polybius thus opts for a combination of all three: ‘it is evident that we must regard as the best constitution a combination of all these three varieties, since we have had proof of this not only theoretically but by actual experience, Lycurgus having been the first to draw up a constitution — that of Sparta — on this principle’ (*His* VI. 3.7–9). That is to say that rather than repudiating monarchy/kingship in light of its tendency to tyranny, Polybius affirms a mixed constitution which makes a

Political Theory’, in *Justice and Generosity*, ed. by Laks and Schofield, pp. 7–47 (pp. 8–9). On the importance of Polybius’s version of the *anakuklōsis* for the republican tradition, see Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, pp. 77–80; Blythe, *Ideal Government and the Mixed Constitution*, pp. 3–29, 265–300; Gary Trompf, *The Idea of Historical Recurrence in Western Thought From Antiquity to the Reformation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979).

place for a monarchical 'element' where that element could be embodied by a single person, or by two people, as it was in Sparta and republican Rome. Though Polybius does not in his discussion of Sparta observe that under Lycurgus's constitution there were two kings, he is quite explicit on how the consulship constituted a monarchical element in the mature republican constitution that existed in Rome by the time of the Second Punic War (218–202 BC): 'if one looks at this part of the administration alone [the consulship], one may reasonably pronounce the constitution to be a pure monarchy or kingship' (*His* VI. 12.9–10). Polybius recommends the mixed constitution in part because, like many ancient historians and political thinkers including Aristotle (*P* 1313a18–33), he thinks that the mixed constitution, which was instituted by Lycurgus in Sparta and which Rome, 'by the discipline of many struggles and troubles, and always choosing the best by the light of the experience gained in disaster' eventually came to have, is more lasting and stable than any of the three pure forms of government (*His* VI. 1.13–14). This is because under a mixed constitution such as that instituted by Lycurgus,

none of the principles should grow unduly and be perverted into its allied, evil, but that, the force of each being neutralized by that of the others, neither of them should prevail and outbalance another but that the constitution should remain for long in a state of equilibrium like a well-trimmed boat, kingship being guarded from arrogance by the fear of the commons, who were given a sufficient share in the government, and the commons on the other hand not venturing to treat the kings with contempt from fear of the elders, who being selected from the best citizens would be sure all of them to be always on the side of justice. (*His* VI. 10.7–10)

Under the mixed constitution, then, the tendency of the pure forms to degenerate is held in check, and the government is removed from the inexorable progress of the *anakuklōsis*. In addition to being relatively stable, a constitution under which a king (or monarchical element) is held in check by bodies representing the nobles and the people ensures the liberty of all: 'by drawing up his constitution thus he [Lycurgus] preserved liberty at Sparta for a longer period than is recorded elsewhere' (*His* VI. 10.11). Finally, the particular kind of mixed constitution developed by Rome eventually made it efficient in achieving its goals, including that of world domination: 'this peculiar form of constitution possesses an irresistible power to achieve any goal it has set itself' (*His* VI. 18.4).

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Cicero, too, has many good things to say about monarchy in general and the Roman monarchy in particular. In both *On Laws* and *On Duties*, Cicero (perhaps drawing on Polybius's account of the origins of kingship) affirms single-person forms of government on grounds that, especially in the early stages of political

societies, they effectively serve justice. Observing in *On Laws* that ‘all ancient peoples were once subject to kings’, he adds that ‘that kind of power was originally vested in the wisest and the most just (and that practice prevailed, for the most part, in our country as long as the kings reigned over it)’ (III. 4). He makes the point in *On Duties* when he writes that ‘in Rome, men of good character were established as kings in order that justice might be enjoyed’, and that the Romans were in fact content with that form of government ‘as long as they secured justice’ under it (II. 41).

Indeed, striving ‘to liberate kingship, especially the Roman kings, from any association with the primitive and the barbarous’, Cicero in *On the Republic*, Dorothea Frede observes, insists on ‘the enlightened character of Roman kingship’ and presents a ‘patched-together eulogy of kingship’.⁶ This is hardly surprising given that, after having reasserted Greek definitions of monarchy as one of the three just and true forms of government and clearly differentiated it from tyranny, Scipio claims that if he had to choose between the three basic true forms, he would choose monarchy (*Rep* I. 69), a preference he reaffirms in Book II (*Rep* II. 43). Scipio is, moreover, an enthusiastic supporter of dictatorship as it was institutionalized in Rome: ‘in times of more serious conflict, our countrymen have decreed that the supreme power should not be shared, even with one colleague, but should rest in the hands of an individual whose very name reflects the nature of his power. For a dictator is so called in virtue of the fact that his appointment is dictated’ (*Rep* I. 63). As Scipio later remarks, the dictatorship, when it was instituted some time around 501, ‘was regarded as a new kind of power, very similar to the regal model’ (*Rep* II. 56). It is because Cicero basically supports the principle that, in times of trouble, the rule of a single person is best that, when he lays down laws for the ideal republic in *On Laws*, he stipulates that ‘when a particularly serious war or civil disorder occurs, one man shall for a period no longer than six months hold power equal to that of the two consuls, if the Senate so decide’ (III. 9).⁷ Finally, it should not be forgotten that in

⁶ Dorothea Frede, ‘Constitution and Citizenship: Peripatetic Influence on Cicero’s Political Conceptions in the *De re publica*’, in *Cicero’s Knowledge of the Peripatos*, ed. by Fortenbaugh and Steinmetz, pp. 77–100 (p. 91).

⁷ In their notes to their edition of *The Laws* and *The Republic*, Jonathan Powell and Niall Rudd claim that the office of dictator had been obsolete since 216, and that Cicero was thus reintroducing it in laying down his laws for the republic in this work (p. 217). For more on dictatorship as ‘a temporary and exceptional revival of the kingship in all its power’, see Claude Nicolet, ‘Dictatorship in Rome’, in *Dictatorship in History and Theory: Bonapartism, Caesarism, and Totalitarianism*, ed. by Peter Baehr and Melvin Richter (Cambridge: Cambridge University

light of the justice, wisdom, moderation, and clemency displayed by Caesar after he had made himself dictator and defeated Pompey (but before he had made himself *perpetual* dictator), Cicero delivered what amounted to a panegyric in the senate upon this man who had attained 'absolute power over everything'.⁸

However, like Polybius, with whom he was close friends and to whom he refers in the dialogue, Scipio in *On the Republic* feels that all three basic forms of government tend to ruin, whereas the mixed constitution is more stable:

though monarchy is, in my view, much the most desirable of the three primary forms, monarchy is itself surpassed by an even and judicious blend of the three simple forms at their best. A state should possess an element of regal supremacy; something else should be assigned and allotted to the authority of aristocrats; and certain affairs should be reserved for the judgement and desires of the masses. (*Rep* II. 69)

This mixed constitution is what Scipio means when he refers to the 'best constitution' towards which Rome was naturally and gradually moving during the regal period. When, in *On Laws*, Cicero frames laws 'not just for the Roman people, but for all good and stable communities' (II. 35), he thus frames laws for this mixed constitution preferred by Scipio. As Cicero claims, 'we are, in fact, talking about the harmoniously mixed constitution which Scipio praises in those books and prefers to all others' (*Laws* III. 12), one in which 'there shall be two with royal power' (*Laws* III. 8). Under what for Cicero is the ideal constitution, which is the one that Rome in fact came to have, that is to say, 'only the name of king has been abandoned; the institution itself will remain in being', but its power will be limited by that of the senate and the tribunate (*Laws* III. 15–16). Milton was aware of this monarchical dimension of the consuls: in *Eikonoklastes*, he observes that 'the noblest Romans' had to request from the plebeians 'a kind of Regal honour, the Consulship'.⁹

Press, 2004), pp. 263–78, and Michael Crawford, *The Roman Republic*, 2nd edn (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), pp. 55, 122. Though, in the *Philippics*, Cicero praises Antony for abolishing the office of dictatorship after the assassination of Caesar, he here still endorses the *senatus consultum ultimum*, an act by which the senate granted extraordinary powers, comparable to those held by the dictators from 501–216, to the consuls.

⁸ See *Pro Marcello* (*For Marcellus*), in *Political Speeches*, trans. by D. H. Berry (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 212. See also Cicero's first deliberative speech, 'On the Command of Gnaeus Pompeius' (66 BC), in which, in the process of supporting Pompey's command of the war against Mithridates, Cicero extols the virtues of placing 'everything' under the control of a single person such as Pompey who is so outstanding (in *Political Speeches*, pp. 102–33).

⁹ *Eikonoklastes*, p. 461.

The main reason Scipio is so positive about the regal period of Rome when, in Book II of *On the Republic*, he narrates the constitutional history of Rome from Romulus (753 BC) down to the Decemvirate (451–449 BC) is that he endorses the mixed constitution, and Rome, during this regal period, in fact had a mixed constitution. ‘Romulus’, he observes, ‘realized that states are better governed and controlled by the king’s sole power and authority when the influence of all the best men is allowed to act upon the absolute monarch. So, protected and supported by this council, which was a kind of senate, Romulus waged many highly successful wars against his neighbours’ (*Rep* II. 15). Scipio here and elsewhere (*Rep* II. 17, II. 23) indicates that, from 753 onwards, the Roman constitution was mixed in the sense that a senate consisting of the best men influenced the ruling power that was seated in the monarch (‘even the kings had a Senate’, as Cicero observes in the third *Philippic* (III. 4.9)). Scipio’s narrative of the regal period also indicates that, from the second king, Numa, onward, the people had some say in who governed: ‘on the death of King Pompilius the people made Tullus Hostilius king at a meeting of the Assembly of voting Districts chaired by the interrex. And Tullus, following Pompilius’ example, had his position officially ratified by each district in turn’ (*Rep* II. 31). After Tullus, ‘Ancus Marcius, the son of Numa Pompilius’ daughter, was appointed king by the people’ (*Rep* II. 33); on the death of Marcius, ‘the monarchy passed, by the unanimous vote of the people, to Lucius Tarquinius’ who enlarged the senate (*Rep* II. 35); Servius was the first king ‘to rule without being formally chosen by the people’, though he still had ‘their consent and goodwill’ and was later ‘pronounced king by acclamation, and had the decision legally ratified by the Assembly of Voting Districts’ (*Rep* II. 37–38). And even though the constitutional reforms of Servius resulted in ‘the preponderance of the votes’ being ‘in the hands, not of the masses, but of the wealthy’, the masses could still exercise a degree of influence over political decisions (*Rep* II. 39). As Scipio later observes, there was ‘a degree of popular power [...] in the period of our kings’ (*Rep* II. 43).¹⁰

Seeing them ruling in accordance with a constitution that was in some respects mixed, Scipio thus lavishes great praise on the kings for having established the

¹⁰ For confirmation of this point, see Andrew Lintott, ‘The Theory of the Mixed Constitution at Rome’, in *Philosophia Togata II*, ed. by Barnes and Griffin, pp. 70–85 (pp. 82–83); Ferrary, ‘Statesman and the Law in the Political Philosophy of Cicero’; the notes on Book II by Jonathan Powell and Niall Rudd in Rudd’s translation of *The Republic*, pp. 184–92; Brunt, ‘*Libertas* in the Republic’, p. 324; T. J. Cornell, ‘Cicero on the Origins of Rome’, in *Cicero’s Republic*, ed. by J. G. F. Powell and J. A. North (London: Institute of Classical Studies, University of London, 2001), pp. 41–56 (p. 55).

foundations of the Roman constitution, culture, character, and empire in the way they did. For it is during the regal period that the state 'was developing and moving by a kind of natural process along the road to the best constitution' (*Rep* II. 30). As Laelius, one of the other participants in the dialogue, remarks, Scipio's account of the kings shows that 'as one king succeeds another more and more benefits and advantages are accruing' (*Rep* II. 37). In Scipio's narration of Roman history, that is, it is not the case that monarchy is presented as some kind of fundamental constitutional mistake which is corrected by a revolutionary institution of a republican form of government. It is presented as an essential stage in the gradual and natural development of the Roman state towards the best constitution.

It is, moreover, important to observe that Cicero in these works is profoundly ambivalent on the issue of the constitutional conditions under which civil liberty is secured and the conditions under which the Romans themselves came to enjoy it. On the one hand, Scipio claims that under the kings, the people were not free, since they were subject to a power and authority comparable to that which a master has over a slave (*Rep* II. 43). On the other hand, observing that the third king, Tullus Hostilius, built a house for the senate and a place for the people's assembly and drew up a legal procedure for declaring war, Scipio directs his friends to note 'how firmly our kings already grasped the point that certain rights should be granted to the people' (*Rep* II. 31). This would seem to indicate that during the regal period, the people had some rights and therefore some degree of freedom (where freedom is defined in terms of the possession of civil rights). Scipio seems to confirm this later when he observes that the proper form of monarchy 'requires that the security, the equal rights, and the peace of the community should be controlled by the permanent power, and the comprehensive justice and wisdom of a single man' (*Rep* II. 43). Again, it would appear that though the king may control the rights of the people, the people still have some rights protected by law and are therefore not in a condition of slavery, where slavery is defined in terms of rightlessness. In addition, Scipio claims that even under the kings, the populace also enjoyed the right that under the republic was deemed to be constitutive of their civil freedom: *provocatio*, the right of the people to appeal any magistrate's sentence of death or flogging handed down to a Roman citizen (*Rep* II. 53–54). If being free is at least in part a matter of having rights that slaves do not have, they would therefore have been to some extent free. Scipio is more explicit on this point when he refers to both Romulus and Lycurgus as kings who granted a 'certain amount of power to the people' and so gave 'them permission just to taste freedom' (*Rep* II. 50).

Scipio is equally ambivalent concerning the nature of the freedom enjoyed by the people upon the expulsion of Tarquin and the establishment of the republic.

On the one hand, he claims that ‘after Tarquin’s expulsion the populace revelled in an extraordinary excess of liberty’ (*Rep* I. 62). On the other hand, it appears as though the shift to the ‘republic’ really was not so important when it came to the freedom of the people, for during the early republic the kind of power wielded by the kings — whatever it may have been — was neither *abolished* nor *limited* but simply *transferred* to the consuls:

though the people were free, not much was done through them; most things were done on the authority of the Senate according to custom and precedent. The consuls had a power which, though limited in length to one year, was in its nature and legitimacy equivalent to that of a king. And (a factor that was perhaps the most vital in maintaining the power of the aristocracy) the rule was staunchly retained whereby the people’s corporate decisions were not valid unless endorsed by the Senate’s authority. (*Rep* II. 56)

If the power of the consuls was equivalent to that of a king, and if the people were not free under that power when one person held it, how could they have been free when they were under that very same power held by two people? It is because Cicero himself recognizes the problem here that, in *On Laws*, he asks his brother Quintus, ‘was it not inevitable that the consular power on its own should appear rather arrogant and oppressive?’ (III. 17; see also III. 8). In *On the Republic*, Scipio goes on to note that Publicola, one of the first consuls, granted the people ‘a modest amount of freedom’ but with the result that he ‘preserved more easily the authority of the leading citizens’ (II. 55). ‘Not even the system of Lycurgus kept the Greek population under so tight a rein’ as the consuls and senate did ten years into the republic, Scipio claims (*Rep* II. 58). And though the power and authority of the senate was reduced by the introduction of the tribunate in 494 following the First Secession of the Plebs (*Rep* II. 58), by the time of the Decemvirate in 451, ‘the supreme authority resided in the Senate and the people were docile and obedient’ (*Rep* II. 61).

Cicero confirms some of these points in *On Laws*. Just as the Spartans appointed ephors to oppose the kings, so the Romans, Cicero asserts, appointed tribunes to oppose the consuls, as though consular power was really comparable to regal power. It was this appointment of the tribunes, officials who were not ‘bound by the consul’s authority’ that amounted to ‘the first step in the reduction of consular power. The second was the fact that the tribune lent his support, not only to other magistrates, but also to private individuals who flouted the consul’s authority’ (*Laws* III. 16). Cicero then observes that the ‘freedom’ that the plebeians got by way of the tribunes, though an ‘actual’ freedom, ‘was given in such a way that the common people were induced by many excellent regulations to acquiesce in the aristocrats’ authority’ (*Laws* III. 25). Moreover, that Cicero clearly approves of this

granting of nominal freedom to the people in order to make them acquiesce in and obey the authority of the senate is clear from the reasons he provides for his proposal that 'when the people's appointment of magistrates, judicial verdicts, and legislative decision, positive and negative, have been made by vote, the details shall be disclosed to the aristocracy and shall reflect the free choice of the people' (*Laws* III. 10). Cicero explains that the liberty the people would get by way of this law is really insubstantial:

I am giving the people only that amount of freedom which will allow a thriving aristocracy to use its authority [...]. By all means let the people have the ballot as a guarantee of liberty, provided the vote is disclosed and actually displayed to the best and most unimpeachable citizens. In that way liberty will exist precisely in the sense that the people are given the opportunity to do the aristocracy an honourable favour [...]. Thanks to my law, the appearance of liberty is given to the people, the authority of the aristocracy is retained, and the cause of quarrelling is removed. (*Laws* III. 39)

In light of these remarks and the extensive set of regulations governing the 'lifestyle' (*Rep* IV. 12) of all citizens which Cicero lays down in this work, it seems clear that the civil liberty enjoyed by the vast majority of citizens under the republic was in fact quite limited, and that whatever rights or freedoms from restraint to pursue their own ends they may have enjoyed were little more than concessions granted with the aim of sustaining the authority of the senate and the citizens' respect for it and their obedience to its commands.

Cicero thus profoundly compromises the distinction he sometimes draws between the Roman monarchy and the republic by showing, on the one hand, that the constitution was to some extent mixed during the regal period and the people had some civil rights (and therefore a degree of freedom), and on the other hand, that the constitution of the early republic was a mixed constitution under which the consuls and dictators held an authority comparable to that held by the kings, the people in fact held and exercised very little political power, and the people were kept under a very tight rein by the nobles. In addition, Cicero suggests that, when it comes to the freedom of the people, it was the introduction of the tribunate, rather than the shift from king to consuls, that was the more important constitutional reform, for he identifies the power held by the consuls with the power held by kings — all that really happened in 509 was that 'regal power' was shifted from one agent to another. It thus is not the case that in these works Cicero presents a clear case for republics over monarchies on grounds that civil liberty can exist only in the former. Civil liberty can certainly exist in states where the regal power is limited, and Cicero sometimes speaks as though even where it is absolute the citizens may still enjoy some rights.

* * *

Skinner and others commonly cite *The War with Catiline* to justify the claim that classical republicans such as Sallust repudiate monarchical forms of government and assert republican constitutions because they feel that only under the latter do citizens enjoy civil liberty and do the state and its citizens achieve civic greatness. The passage they cite is one from the preface where Sallust comments on the period following the moment when the Romans abolished monarchy and ‘altered their form of government and appointed two rulers with annual power, thinking that this device would prevent men’s minds from growing arrogant through unlimited authority’ (*Cat* 6.7). ‘Now at that time’, Sallust writes,

every man began to lift his head higher and to have his talents more in readiness. For kings hold the good in greater suspicion than the wicked, and to them the merit of others is always fraught with danger; still the free state, once liberty was won, waxed incredibly strong and great in a remarkably short time, such was the thirst for glory that had filled men’s minds. (*Cat* 7.1–4)

Skinner, however, does not properly acknowledge Sallust’s remarks earlier in the preface which qualify these claims. At the opening of the preface, Sallust seems to think of the early days of kings as a kind of golden age, for ‘in the beginning’ there were kings, and ‘at that time men’s lives were still free from covetousness; each was quite content with his own possessions’ (*Cat* 2.1). Observing how Cyrus, king of Persia, and the Spartans and Athenians then subjected other nations through war to gratify their thirst for power, Sallust does not criticize monarchy. He simply laments that ‘if the mental excellence with which kings and rulers are endowed were as potent in peace as in war, human affairs would run an evener and steadier course, and you would not see power passing from hand to hand and everything in turmoil and confusion’ (*Cat* 2.3). Here Sallust is not repudiating monarchy but asserting the importance of virtue and intellectual energy to *any* regime’s maintenance of political stability and power. Proceeding with his brief history of Rome, Sallust observes that the early Romans ‘had a constitution founded upon law, which was in name a monarchy’ (*Cat* 6.6). Does this mean that the early Romans were stultified? No. While they lived under this monarchical constitution, the Romans became ‘amply rich and amply strong’ with the result that they were envied and attacked by neighbouring kings and peoples. Does this mean they were not free? No. Putting forth their whole energy, the Romans ‘made all haste, got ready, encouraged one another, went to meet the foe, and defended their liberty, their country, and their parents by arms’ (*Cat* 6.3–5). ‘The rule of the kings’, that is to say, ‘at first had tended to preserve freedom and advance the state’ (*Cat* 6.7). It is only after observing how the monarchy — for more than two

hundred years — safeguarded liberty and enhanced the state that Sallust observes that it ‘degenerated into a lawless tyranny’ and makes the remarks on the gaining (or more properly, *regaining*) of liberty under the republic which are given such prominence by those who were attempting to justify the independent Italian communes and city-republics from the early thirteenth century onwards, and by Skinner himself.

That it is crude to take this preface as a repudiation of monarchy is, furthermore, clear from the way Sallust here narrates the fortunes of republican Rome. After describing how virtuous and successful the Romans were during the early and middle republic, he describes how, in the wake of the destruction of Carthage,

the lust for money first, then for power, grew upon them; these were, I may say, the root of all evils. For avarice destroyed honour, integrity, and all other noble qualities; taught in their place insolence, cruelty, to neglect the gods, to set a price on everything. Ambition drove many men to become false [. . .]; finally, when the disease had spread like a deadly plague, the state was changed and a government second to none in equity and excellence became cruel and intolerable. (*Cat* 10.1–6)

Republics, too, degenerate into forms of tyranny. Moreover, whereas according to Sallust public morality did not degenerate under monarchy, even when monarchy had degenerated into tyranny, under the republic it did. It is also important to note that in the preface to *The War with Jugurtha*, Sallust observes that once corruption has set in, the fact that a republic rather than a monarchy may be in place is really irrelevant: ‘in these degenerate days’, he observes, even the new men who used to rely on merit to gain office resort to intrigue and fraud, ‘as if a praetorship, a consulship, or anything else of the kind were distinguished and illustrious in and of itself and were not valued according to the merit of those who live up to it’ (4.7–9). That the principal magistrates in Rome or anywhere else are consuls and praetors rather than kings, that is, means very little, for the value of magistracies derives chiefly from the merit of those who hold them.

It is thus unreasonable to infer from the prefaces to the two monographs that monarchies are bad and republics, which call for consuls and praetors rather than kings, are good. The main point concerning forms of government is that, regardless of what form is in place, virtue in the rulers and the people is essential to the stability and success of that government in both its foreign and domestic affairs. This virtue, Sallust also observes, can be corrupted by many things, such as the destruction of a long-feared enemy (as Carthage was to Rome) and the consequent disappearance of fear of an enemy, peace and prosperity, and military commanders (such as Sulla) who permit their troops to indulge in wine and women and cultivate a taste for the arts when they are stationed abroad.

Though Sallust pays lip service to the story that the Romans attained civil liberty in 509 when it formally abolished *regnum*, then, he shows that they in fact enjoyed some degree of civil liberty under the monarchs. Living under a monarchical form of government, Sallust claims, does not necessarily mean that one is deprived of civil liberties. More importantly, like Cicero, he shows that living under a non-monarchical, republican form of government, such as that which was established in Rome in 509, does not necessarily mean that the majority of citizens of a political society will enjoy civil liberty, where this is understood in terms of the enjoyment of civil rights. For he and several of his Romans show that it was the establishment of the tribunate in 494, and not the mere displacement of the monarch by consuls in 509, that was the decisive *constitutional* mechanism by which liberty for the plebeians was established and maintained. Certainly Sallust displays an awareness in the monographs that the tribunes of the late republic could be corrupt and in some cases were not in fact acting in the interests of the liberty of the plebeians (*Cat* 38.1–4). And his cynicism in this regard is consistent with his view that the existence of *any* particular office means little unless it is held by good men. But in his speech to the Roman people which Sallust records in *The Histories*, the consul Lepidus, urging the people to fight to regain the liberty they had lost under Sulla who had curtailed the power of the tribunes, places his faith in the army, ‘unless haply they took the field to overthrow the power of the tribunes, which their forefathers had established, and to rob themselves with their own hands of their rights and their jurisdiction’ (23). The importance the tribunate was seen to have in relation to civil liberty is more emphatically asserted by the tribune Macer in his speech to the people in 73 BC: the plebeians, Macer claims at the opening of the speech, ‘won the tribunes of the commons as the defenders of all their rights’ (*Histories* 1–2). The real issue at stake in the recent political infighting has been ‘the tribunician power, a weapon given you by your ancestors, with which to defend your liberties’ (*Histories* 12–13). This is the power Macer exhorts the people to regain and use, in opposition to ‘that supreme power of the consuls, and those potent decrees of the senate’. In order to regain their liberty, they must, he urges, put their hopes in Pompey, who ‘will join you and lead you in restoring the power of the tribunes’ (*Histories* 23). Such remarks clearly indicate that, at least from the plebeian perspective to which Macer appeals and with which Sallust displays considerable sympathy, the difference between king and consuls did not amount to a difference between slavery and freedom *for them*. More recent historians agree. As Brunt observes, ‘it was only on an aristocratic conception that liberty could be said to have originated in the fall of the monarchy, which in the Roman tradition resulted in but a small accretion to the political rights of the

people'.¹¹ It was thus a republic with an empowered tribunate — and a tribunate that was held by virtuous men — that meant civil liberty for the plebeians.

It should also be noted that, insofar as civil liberty is understood in terms of non-domination (see Chapter 4), Sallust, like Cicero, indicates that civil liberty could not have been inaugurated with the abolition of the monarchy and establishment of a republican constitution. First of all, the 'device' for dealing with the corrupt monarchy seems not to be any *limitation* placed on the actual power wielded by those who govern; what changes is that the power that was wielded by the king is simply *transferred* to two men, and that those two men can wield it for only a one-year period. But if that is all that happened, the people would still have been subject to a power that was tantamount to the domination to which they were subject under *regnum* (but one that simply moved around more frequently). If being subject to such a power meant that they could not be free, then they could not have been free.

Furthermore, when Cicero, as consul, was faced with the mounting conspiracy against him in particular and the republic at large, he 'called the attention of the senate to the matter'. As was 'often done in a dangerous emergency', the senate voted 'that the consuls should take heed that the commonwealth suffer no harm'. Sallust observes that 'the power which according to Roman usage is thus conferred upon a magistrate by the senate is supreme, allowing him to raise an army, wage war, exert any kind of compulsion upon allies and citizens, and exercise *unlimited command and jurisdiction at home and in the field*; otherwise the consul has none of these privileges except by the order of the people' (*Cat* 29.1–3; my italics). Again, on a definition of civil liberty in terms of non-domination, Sallust and other Romans would have routinely had whatever civil liberty they enjoyed under the republican constitution revoked by the practice of appointing dictators (from 501 up until the end of the Second Punic War) or (after this war) passing the *senatus consultum ultimum* by which the senate granted dictatorial powers to the consuls.¹²

As we will observe in the next chapter, however, for Sallust and his Roman citizens, civil freedom was first and foremost the absence of *actual* interference with

¹¹ Brunt, 'Libertas in the Republic', p. 330. See also Crawford, *Roman Republic*, pp. 24–25; Graham Maddox, 'The Limits of Neo-Roman Liberty', *History of Political Thought*, 23 (2002), 418–32. Maddox criticizes Pettit and Skinner on grounds that they fail to recognize that 'republicanism was invented by the Roman patrician order, who determined to exclude the *plebs* from all civil rights save the privilege of fighting and dying for their country' (p. 421).

¹² Nicolet finds that the Romans appointed a dictator seventy-six times over the first three hundred years of the republic ('Dictatorship in Rome', p. 265).

the exercise of civil rights, and only secondly the absence of an agent that *could* interfere with them with impunity. It is because they understand civil freedom mainly in this way that, as long as consuls and dictators wielding supreme power did not in fact unjustly interfere with the exercise of their civil liberties, they felt they could be free even when they were subject to such empowered magistrates.

* * *

It is in part because neither Aristotle nor Polybius nor Cicero nor Sallust repudiates monarchy and affirms republics and because these figures held such authority in the minds of later Roman historians and theorists of the republic that the latter do not do so either. Livy, for example, need not have led Milton to write 'against Monarchie', as Aubrey claimed he did,¹³ for in Livy's treatment of the regal period of Rome in *From the Founding of the City*, kings and kingship come off rather well. Indeed, over the course of Book I, monarchy emerges as a productive, legitimate, and necessary form of government in light of the fact that the natures of the first Romans were 'wild and savage' and that the early Roman populace 'was ignorant and [...] uncivilized' (*Liv* I. 19). Thus after the first king, Romulus, had founded the city 'by force of arms', the second king, Numa, who was renowned 'for justice and piety', gave the city 'a new foundation in law, statutes, and observances' (*Liv* I. 18–19). Livy clearly approves of these kings on grounds that they served the common good: 'thus two successive kings in different ways, one by war, the other by peace, promoted the nation's welfare' (*Liv* I. 21.5). Rome continued to grow under the next elected king, Tullus, and then Ancus, 'a king inferior to none of his predecessors in the arts of peace and war and in the reputation they conferred' (*Liv* I. 35.1). Livy is just as positive about Servius Tullius, a slave elected by the people to succeed the first Tarquin king (also a good king), for he established 'what is by far the most important work of peace', namely, 'the census, a most useful thing for a government destined to such wide dominion, since it would enable the burdens of war and peace to be borne not indiscriminately, as heretofore, but in proportion to men's wealth' (*Liv* I. 42.4–5). For this, and for distributing lands taken by conquest to the plebeians, the people consented to his rule 'with such unanimity as none of his predecessors had experienced' (*Liv* I. 46.1). He 'ruled forty-four years, so well that even a good and moderate successor would have found it hard to emulate him. But there was this to enhance his renown, that just and lawful kingship perished with him' (*Liv* I. 48.8–9). It is thus only with the next king, Lucius Tarquinius Superbus, that Rome came under a king whose behaviour was

¹³ Aubrey's *Brief Lives*, ed. by Oliver Lawson Dick (London, 1949), p. 203.

'unjust' in peacetime (though he was still an effective military leader) and whose reign, along with the monarchical form of government, was brought to an end by Lucius Junius Brutus, one of the first two consuls of the republic.

The fact that, in this first book of his history, Livy claims that the first Romans had 'not yet tasted the sweetness of liberty' (*Liv* I. 17.4) and that under the kings liberty had not yet arrived (*Liv* I. 46.3), then, hardly leads him to repudiate monarchy as a form of government. Monarchy, as Livy makes clear in the great passage at the beginning of Book II, was in fact necessary to the preservation of the young nation, and a republican form of government *for it* would have spelled disaster:

The new liberty enjoyed by the Roman people, their achievements in peace and war, annual magistracies, and laws superior in authority to men will henceforth be my theme. This liberty was the more grateful as the last king had been so great a tyrant. For his predecessors so ruled that there is good reason to regard them all as successive founders of parts, at least, of the City, which they added to serve as new homes for the numbers they had themselves recruited. Nor is there any doubt that the same Brutus who earned such honour by expelling the haughty Tarquinius, would have acted in an evil hour for the commonwealth had a premature eagerness for liberty led him to wrest the power from any of the earlier kings. For what would have happened if that rabble of shepherds and vagrants, having deserted their own peoples, and under the protection of inviolable sanctuary having possessed themselves of liberty, or at least impunity, had thrown off their fear of kings only to be stirred by the ruffling storms of tribunician demagogues, breeding quarrels with the senators of a city not their own, before ever the pledges of wife and children and love of the very place and soil (an affection of slow growth) had firmly united their aspirations? The nation would have crumbled away with dissension before it had matured. But it was favoured by the mild restraint of the government, which nursed it up to the point where its ripened powers enabled it to bear good fruit of liberty. (*Liv* II. 1.1–7)

Again, one might *use* this passage in an attempt to justify an attack on kings, or an attack on a particular king, but such a use would obviously do considerable violence to it, for the basic lesson to be drawn here is not that monarchies are right and republics are wrong. It is rather that the effectiveness and desirability of forms of government are contingent upon the nature of those to be governed: men who are not committed to their families and who do not love the soil need to be cowed into submission by single persons who, like the Roman kings, wield political power in a way which is mild and caring. It is only by virtue of being subjected to this kind of rule that such men acquire the strength and maturity required for the productive enjoyment of the liberties that are granted to them under republican rule. If republics are right and monarchies are wrong for the mature, monarchies are right and republics are wrong for the barbaric and immature. Far from being a two-hundred-and-forty-year mistake, the monarchical form of government in Rome was in fact a necessary and productive preparation for the republic. Milton

himself makes this point when, referring to this passage in *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, he observes that though Livy praises the Romans for gaining their liberty by ridding themselves of a 'wicked Prince', the Roman historian also observes that to have 'extorted' that liberty 'from *Numa*, or any of the good Kings before, had not bin seasonable'.¹⁴

This way of thinking about monarchy is consistent with the way in which Livy thinks about institutions and the past in general. For as Gary Miles observes, 'Livy presents an approach to Roman history that explicitly acknowledges the value of change and that denies to the *maiores* [ancestors] and their institutions a universal and timeless value. In his history, the value of institutions is most often judged by the needs of the occasion, not by the more sweeping standard of the *mos maiorum*'.¹⁵ Moreover, that Livy is not averse to single-person rule on some occasions has been felt by many to be evident from his analysis of the decline of the republic from the defeat of Hannibal down to his own day, and his attitude towards Augustus. T. J. Luce, for example, claims,

we must conclude that Livy viewed the situation of his own day as analogous in some respects to that of the Rome of the kings. In each case strong steps were required to initiate (or revive) a moral climate: that is, severe laws and even a measure of authoritarianism to promulgate and enforce them. This is one important way in which Livy was 'Augustan' in temperament and sympathies. His description of the monarchical government as *tranquilla moderatio imperii* would probably have pleased Augustus as a description of his own regime.¹⁶

And arguing that the notion of recurrence is central to Livy's interpretation of the past, Miles observes that Livy presents both Furius Camillus and Augustus as figures who repeat the act of founding Roman character and Roman *pietas* that was first performed by the first king: 'while Livy describes one sequence of foundation, decline, and refoundation from Romulus to Camillus, so he holds out implicitly the prospect of a second sequence from the refoundation by Camillus through the decline of the late Republic described in the preface to a possible new refoundation by Augustus'.¹⁷ Remembering the founding by king Romulus and the refounding

¹⁴ *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, p. 14.

¹⁵ Gary B. Miles, *Livy: Reconstructing Early Rome* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), p. 119.

¹⁶ T. J. Luce, *Livy: The Composition of his History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 290–91. For further argumentation along these lines, see A. J. Woodman, *Rhetoric in Classical Historiography* (Portland: Areopagitica Press, 1988), pp. 136–40.

¹⁷ Miles, *Livy: Reconstructing Early Rome*, p. 94.

by Camillus, anticipating a further refounding by the *princeps* Augustus, that is, Livy shows some inclination to favor de facto monarchical rule when the Romans have fallen away from their virtue.

* * *

Though Machiavelli, regarded by many as the principal means by which classical republicanism was transmitted to early modern Europe,¹⁸ follows Livy in seeing the move from monarchy to the republic as one by virtue of which the Romans acquired their freedom, he also follows him in affirming the rule of the one as the means by which a ferocious and uncivilized populace was civilized and made capable of civic life and liberty, and the means by which the city survived in a dangerous environment. At the beginning of the *Discourses*, he claims that Rome was placed 'under strict discipline by the laws made by Romulus, Numa, and others', laws which 'kept it so rich in virtue that there has never been any other city or any other republic so well adorned' (104). That this should have occurred is not surprising given that it was only by virtue of appointing as their head and obeying 'a man stronger and more courageous than the rest' that in the beginning of the world men 'learned how to distinguish what is honest and good from what is pernicious and wicked' and that 'the notion of justice [...] came into being' (D 107). Again following Livy, and Livy's own precursors, Polybius and Cicero, Machiavelli claims that besides using their power to civilize the people through legislation, the early kings also used it to civilize them through religion: 'Numa, finding the people ferocious and desiring to reduce them to civic obedience by means of the arts of peace, turned to religion as the instrument necessary above all others for the maintenance of a civilized state, and so constituted it that there was never for so many centuries so great a fear of God as there was in this republic' (D 139). Rome was, in short, 'extremely fortunate' in its early kings, 'for it was essential to Rome in its early days that there should arise a legislator to give it a civic constitution, and it was also necessary that there should be others who would again display the virtue of Romulus, since, otherwise, the city would have become effeminate and have fallen a prey to its neighbours' (D 165).

Like Cicero, Sallust, and Livy, moreover, Machiavelli ends up qualifying the proposition that Rome became free only upon the institution of the republic. Early in Book I, for example, he claims that though the early kings did not provide

¹⁸ See Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*; Worden, 'English Republicanism'; Philip Pettit, *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Maurizio Viroli, *Machiavelli* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 114–74; Honohan, *Civic Republicanism*, pp. 42–76.

institutions to preserve liberty, 'Romulus and the rest of the kings made many good laws quite compatible with freedom' (*D* 110). And the fact that upon the expulsion of the kings and the establishment of the republic 'none of its ancient institutions were changed, save that in lieu of a permanent king there were appointed each year two consuls' indicates that the 'original institutions of the city as a whole were more in conformity with a political and self-governing state than with absolutism or tyranny' (*D* 133). Later in the work, at the opening of Book III, Machiavelli claims not that Lucius Junius Brutus instituted freedom in Rome, but that he 'restored' it; the implication of this statement is confirmed when Machiavelli claims that under Tarquinius Superbus, 'Rome had lost all the liberties she had enjoyed under previous kings' (*D* 395). Thus, although, as Viroli points out, Machiavelli sometimes speaks as though the people are not free under monarchy, it is not the case that 'Machiavelli maintains that principality, or monarchy, and liberty are antithetical'.¹⁹ Besides affirming monarchy (or principality) as the form of government which was essential to the civilizing of a ferocious people, the establishment of civic life, and the preservation of Rome, Machiavelli also affirms it as the form of government under which Rome began to enjoy civil liberties it would only *more fully* enjoy under the republic.²⁰

On the basis of his observations of early Rome and other kingdoms such as Sparta and Venice, Machiavelli infers more general 'rules' concerning the appropriateness of the rule of the one. When it comes to the 'organizing of a kingdom or the constituting of a republic', Machiavelli recommends the rule of the one, even where the one is concerned, as Romulus, Moses, Lycurgus, and Solon were, not for himself or his heirs, but for the common good: 'the prudent organizer of a state whose intention it is to govern not in his own interests but for the common good, and not in the interest of his successors but for the sake of the fatherland which is common to all, should contrive to be alone in his authority' (*D* 132). This is mainly because 'diversity of opinion' renders the many incompetent to draw up a consti-

¹⁹ Viroli, *Machiavelli*, p. 130. Viroli is less categorical on this issue in other passages where he recognizes that Machiavelli's republicanism is above all a commitment not to a form of government but to the *vivere civile*, and that this political life 'can be ensured either through a republican government or through monarchy, provided that whoever the sovereign is, is bound by laws' (pp. 121–23). Viroli also recognizes Machiavelli's commitment to mixed government (p. 146). See also *The Prince*, where Machiavelli claims that a people used to living under a prince 'cannot live in freedom without one' (17).

²⁰ For confirmation of and elaboration on this point, see Marcia Colish, 'The Idea of Liberty in Machiavelli', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 32 (1971), 323–50.

tution (*D* 132). After having exercised his authority in constituting and ruling the state, however, the one should relinquish it, since, given that men are more prone to evil than good, the one's successor 'might well make ambitious use of that which he had used virtuously', while the state may well last if many remain in charge (*D* 132). As far as the common good is concerned, then, the rule of the one is more productive than the rule of the many when the state is being founded, but the rule of the many is more productive than the rule of the one in maintaining the state once it has been founded. As Machiavelli puts it much later in the work, 'if princes are superior to populaces in drawing up laws, codes of civic life, statutes and new institutions, the populace is so superior in sustaining what has been instituted, that it indubitably adds to the glory of those who have instituted them' (*D* 256). It is because this is the case that Machiavelli affirms the rule of the one in the early days of Rome and Sparta and recommends it to all those who wish to institute a state for the common good.

But Machiavelli also approves of various kinds of single-person rule even after a republic has been instituted and sustained for some period of time. Like Cicero, he affirms, first of all, the Roman practice of frequently appointing dictators who, wielding royal power, commanded all other magistrates and against whose decisions there was no appeal. The Romans usually resorted to this 'institution' of dictatorship when they felt seriously threatened by a foreign military force, but they also did so when the populace was 'dazzled by a kind of spurious goodness' in those who sought by private means to acquire greatness: Rome 'appointed a dictator who by using his royal prerogative should constrain them to return to the fold they had deserted, as she did to punish Spurius Maelius' (*D* 482; see also 190–97).

Machiavelli's affirmation of the routine Roman practice of appointing dictators with 'royal prerogative' is conditional on the fact that 'the dictator could do nothing to diminish the constitutional position of the government', that during his tenure, 'the tribunes, the consuls, the senate, with their respective powers, remained' (*D* 194–97). But, as we observed in the previous chapter, there is another occasion, one which according to him is unavoidable for republics, on which he recommends a kind of single-person rule which is not subject to these limitations. The occasion is the corruption of the people and the deterioration of the civic life. When corruption begins to take hold of citizens of a republic — and this is something that is inevitable — law loses whatever efficacy it has to instill and sustain virtue and more drastic measures are required. Under such circumstances, 'it is necessary to resort to extraordinary methods, such as the use of force and an appeal to arms, and, before doing anything, to become a prince in the state, so that one can dispose it as one thinks fit' (*D* 163). It is only through the exercise of 'quasi-regal

power', he adds, that arrogant men can be restrained (*D* 164). Thus even when one wants to maintain a republic, in cases where the matter of the republic — the people — has become corrupt, the only way of doing so is by way of the rule of the one. This is why Machiavelli approves of Cleomenes who, seeing that the people of Sparta, though not steeped in corruption, had yet begun to lose their virtue and therefore their power and empire, seized 'sole authority' by killing all those who opposed him and then, for the common good, 'renewed in their entirety the laws of Lycurgus [. . .] and gave fresh life to Sparta' (*D* 134, 163–64). Friedrich Meinecke, in his classic study of Machiavelli as the first major modern theorist of *raison d'état*, thus quite rightly claims that 'his republican ideal [. . .] contained a strain of monarchism', and that 'his concept of *virtù* formed a close link between republican and monarchical tendencies'.²¹

The *general* principle behind Machiavelli's endorsement of one-man rule in these cases is clearly not that some forms of government are bad and others are good, but that the proper form of government for any particular situation depends upon aspects of that situation, where aspects which are relevant include the condition of the rulers and the ruled and the threat to national security. There is, in short, an antiformalist strain in Machiavelli's discussion of the forms of government, one which he makes explicit when he observes by way of an Aristotelian vocabulary that 'different institutions and a different procedure should be prescribed for the governed according as they are good or bad, since similar forms cannot subsist in matter which is disposed in a contrary manner' (*D* 163). But in his treatment of the kind of constitution that Lycurgus laid down for Sparta and, indeed, of the constitution he feels Rome came to have, Machiavelli provides a different kind of argument in favour of monarchical forms of government. In the long second chapter on forms of government, Machiavelli, with Aristotle, Polybius, Cicero, Plutarch, and several medieval Aristotelians as precedents,²² recommends

²¹ Friedrich Meinecke, *Die Idee der Staatsräson in der neueren Geschichte* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1924), trans. by Douglas Scott and published as *Machiavellism: The Doctrine of Raison d'état and its Place in Modern History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957; repr. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), p. 32. See also the introduction to Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, trans. by Mansfield and Tarcov, pp. xx–xxxiii.

²² Though observing that Polybius is Machiavelli's main precedent here, Blythe, *Ideal Government and the Mixed Constitution*, pp. 278–300, also argues for the importance of the medieval Aristotelian theorists of the mixed constitution to Machiavelli and Renaissance Italian republicanism at large. For the centrality of the mixed constitution to Florentine republicanism, see Skinner, 'Republican Virtues in an Age of Princes', p. 130. Plutarch comments on the mixed constitution of Sparta in 'Lycurgus', in *Greek Lives*, trans. by Waterfield, pp. 14–15.

a mixed form of government in light of the problems he sees in each of the three pure forms: 'prudent legislators, aware of their defects, refrained from adopting as such any one of these forms, and chose instead one that shared in them all, since they thought such a government would be stronger and more stable, for if in one and the same state there was principality, aristocracy and democracy each would keep watch over the other' (*D* 109). It is on grounds of the virtues he sees in this mixed form of government, and the fact of the longevity of it in Sparta, that Machiavelli praises its founder: 'Lycurgus is one of those who have earned no small measure of praise for constitutions of this kind. For in the laws which he gave to Sparta, he assigned to the kings, to the aristocracy, and to the populace each its own function, and thus introduced a form of government which lasted for more than eight hundred years to his very great credit and to the tranquility of that city' (*D* 109). Machiavelli's sporadic references in Book I to Sparta and its mixed constitution, moreover, make clear that along with tranquility, the Spartans enjoyed civil liberty under this mixed form, a form which he frequently calls a 'republic': though Sparta 'set up a king and a small senate to govern it', Machiavelli refers to it as an example of 'one of those republics which have been free from such animosities and tumults and yet have enjoyed a long spell of liberty' (*D* 119; also 122). And though Machiavelli at times explicitly distinguishes between the constitutions of Sparta and Rome, he nevertheless in this early theoretical chapter claims that Rome ultimately came to have a mixed form of government, like that of Sparta.

He makes this assertion, one which conflicts with some of his other claims and definitions, by distinguishing, as Polybius, Cicero, and Livy do, between the kingly title and the 'royal power' or 'kingly estate': those who expelled the kings 'at once appointed two consuls to take the place of the king, so that what they expelled was the title of king, not the royal power. In the republic, then, at this stage there were the consuls and the senate, so that as yet it comprised but two of the aforesaid estates, namely Principality and Aristocracy'. Once the populace was granted a share in the government in the form of tribunes, the government comprised democracy, so that 'in its government all three estates now had a share'. The move from monarchy to what Machiavelli here calls 'aristocracy' but which he also commonly calls 'the republic', then, 'did not abolish altogether the royal estate', nor did the move from aristocracy to democracy wholly remove the authority of the aristocracy. Though, after the expulsion of the Tarquins, there was no king, the kingly estate continued to exist and the royal power continued to be wielded by the consuls, with the result that the constitution of Rome ultimately became, like that of Sparta, a mixed form of government. As in Sparta, 'the blending of these estates made a perfect commonwealth' (*D* 111). Recommending the mixed constitution

in this way, Machiavelli also reiterates a point made by Sallust and Livy and slyly conceded by Cicero: that under an aristocratic republican constitution such as that established in Rome in 509, there would be little civil liberty for the people. Because in Rome, as in all other republics, the nobles wish to dominate and oppress the people, an institution such as the tribunate is required to hold them in check and ensure that the people enjoy a reasonable degree of civil liberty: 'if tumults led to the creation of the tribunes, tumults deserve the highest praise, since, besides giving the populace a share in the administration, they [the tribunes] served as the guardian of Roman liberties' (*D* 115; see also 116–18, 124, 233, 387).

* * *

Neither Aristotle, nor Polybius, nor Cicero, nor Sallust, nor Livy, nor Machiavelli, then, are republicans in the strict sense of repudiating monarchy, for several of these figures understand monarchy as a form of government that serves the common good and that is therefore a true form of government, and all recommend it in certain circumstances. Aristotle affirms it as the form of government that is expedient, just, and in accordance with nature when a man or family of pre-eminent virtue arises in the state. In addition, he indicates that monarchy may even be the best form when it comes to the ideal state. As far as the three pure forms of government go, Cicero displays a clear preference for monarchy, but in light of the weaknesses it has simply by virtue of being a pure form, he, like Polybius, prefers a mixed constitution which, by definition, includes a monarch or at least 'royal power'. Cicero, moreover, also makes it clear that rather than being something pernicious from which the Romans needed to break away in order to found a republic, monarchy was in fact suitable for early Rome and was a constitutional form that over a period of two hundred and forty-four years led naturally to the foundation of the republic (though he also observes that the arrogance of the last Tarquin triggered that constitutional change). He is, moreover, quite enthusiastic about dictatorships. Sallust agrees with Cicero's positive assessment of the early Roman monarchy and confirms the elder statesman's view that the move from monarchy to republic in 509 really was not that significant when it came to the freedom of the plebeians. He emphasizes the importance of the tribunate to the plebeians, but also holds that no form of government is good unless its personnel is good. Livy, too, affirms monarchy as the form of government that was necessary to the civilization of the bellicose early Romans, the very survival of the city, and the eventual establishment of a republic under which the Romans enjoyed full liberty — as in Scipio's narration of the development of the Roman constitution in Book II of *On the Republic*, the emphasis is on the *continuity* of the Roman experience, the way in which Roman society developed by way of *accretion* rather than violent change

or 'revolution', as Luce observes.²³ There are, furthermore, indications that, just as he approved of the authoritarian and somewhat deceptive ways in which the kings formed the Roman character, and just as he clearly approved of the authoritarianism of the pious dictator Furius Camillus, he also favored the de facto single-person rule of Augustus as a means of counteracting the moral decline that character had undergone over the final two hundred years of the republic.

Machiavelli affirms the Roman monarchy for many of the same reasons the ancients did: on the basis of his observations of Rome and other 'republics' such as Sparta and Venice, he recommends single-person rule to those who wish to found a state (be it a kingdom or republic), those who wish to reinvigorate a state the citizens of which have begun to grow corrupt, those who wish to disabuse citizens of various delusions they may have, and, it should be added, those who have to establish a government over a society in which there is an unequal distribution of wealth (*D* 248). Machiavelli also shares Cicero's enthusiasm for dictators, though this was in part because he felt the appointment of a dictator did not challenge the constitution of the state (*D* 190–96). And, like Polybius, Cicero, and Aristotle on occasion, Machiavelli, in light of the weaknesses of each of the three main forms of government, forwards a *general* recommendation of a mixed form of government which makes a place, if not for kings, then at least for what Machiavelli calls the 'royal estate' or 'royal power'. Indeed, at least on some occasions, Machiavelli's celebration of the 'republics' of Sparta and Rome amounts to a celebration of the mixed form of government, for it is this form of government that he understands to have been established in these cities.

Given that these authors are central figures in the tradition of republican political thought, and given the way in which they evaluate the forms of government, then, there are good grounds for discarding the 'strict' definition of republicanism according to which one of its essential elements is the repudiation of monarchy and the affirmation of republics. Indeed, given these two facts, there are good grounds for thinking of the refusal to assess the desirability of different forms of government solely on grounds of their form and independently of the circumstances in which those forms exist as an important dimension of republicanism. There is a strong antiformalist, or what James Blythe calls 'relativist' and 'circumstantialist', strain in republican tradition from Aristotle on, the strength of which is greatly underestimated by those historians of political thought and literary critics who define republican tradition in terms of categorical commitments to and repudiations of

²³ Luce, *Livy: The Composition of his History*, Chapter 7.

specific forms of government.²⁴ For though Aristotle may forward (rather ambiguous) views on the ideal form of government, and although many of the authors we have considered recommend a mixed constitution and say many good things about non-monarchical constitutions, they all emphasize that the value, justice, naturalness, longevity, and productiveness of any form of government is a function of that form *and* the particular circumstances in which that form is implemented and administered. As we have seen, these circumstances are defined by, among other things, the ethical standing of the populace, the class structure of the society, the intentions and motivations of the governors, the ambitions of the state (whether or not it wants to expand and have empire), the kind of dangers posed by foreign powers, the extent to which foreigners are allowed to become citizens, and the size of the population. And they claim that in order to determine the desirability of any particular form of government in any given situation, one must therefore take into account these kinds of circumstance.

Paradise Lost

Many critics have claimed that in *Paradise Lost* Milton expresses his rejection of not only the Stuart monarchy but also the monarchical form of government in principle, and his belief that some kind of elected kingless government is best for not only England but also all postlapsarian human societies. And it is this dimension of the poem which, for many of these critics, qualifies it as an expression of

²⁴ See Blythe, *Ideal Government and the Mixed Constitution*, pp. 165–79, and Blythe, “‘Civic Humanism’ and Medieval Political Thought”, in *Renaissance Civic Humanism*, ed. by Hankins, pp. 30–74 (pp. 66–70). Blythe observes this strain in both Aristotle and the political thought of several of his medieval followers whom he presents as forerunners of the ‘civic humanism’ which Baron claimed emerged only after the Middle Ages. See also Nicolai Rubinstein, ‘Italian Political Thought, 1450–1530’, in *Cambridge History of Political Thought*, ed. by Burns with Goldie, pp. 30–65 (pp. 52–54). For the antiformalist strain in Cicero, see Colish, *Stoic Tradition*, pp. 91–93, and Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, ‘Citizenship and the Roman *Res publica*: Cicero and a Christian Corollary’, in *Republicanism: History, Theory and Practice*, ed. by Daniel Weinstock and Christian Nadeau (London: Frank Cass, 2004), pp. 5–21. For the antiformalist strain in Aristotle, Cicero, and some of the Florentines, see Rahe, ‘Situating Machiavelli’, pp. 286–92. For the antiformalist strain in ancient Roman historiography, see Thomas Wiedemann, ‘Reflections of Roman Political Thought in Latin Historical Writing’, in *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*, ed. by Christopher Rowe and Malcolm Schofield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 517–31 (pp. 520–21).

Milton's republicanism.²⁵ This is because they work on a definition of 'republicanism' in terms of the repudiation of monarchy and the affirmation of rule by citizens who are elected by the people to political office for limited terms. These critics fail to see that were it the case that Milton in this poem took this view on the forms of government, he would diverge from the constitutional thought of some of the principal figures in the history of republican political thought and the prevailing position in his own prose.

But Milton does not do this. That, according to the epic poet, there is nothing inherently right or wrong with the monarchical form of government on earth is evident, first, from the fact that there is nothing inherently right or wrong with it in heaven. The narrator clearly identifies God as a king early in the poem when he describes Satan as one who rebelled against 'the Throne and Monarchy of God' (I. 42), and he and other characters in the poem proceed to elaborate so comprehensively upon this description of divinity that it becomes, as Stevie Davies puts it, 'a massive and central image of the poem'.²⁶ Monarchy in heaven is clearly right, but what makes it right is not that it is a monarchy, but that God and the Son are the monarchs. The essential reason that God and the Son can make monarchical government in heaven right is identified by God when he commends the angel Abdiel upon his return from the rebel camp in the north of heaven: it remains for Abdiel and his friends 'to subdue / By force, who reason for thir Law refuse, / Right reason for thir Law, and for thir King / *Messiah*, who by right of merit Reigns' (VI. 40–43). The Son's kingly reign is warranted by what God calls 'merit' and what Abdiel shortly after in his challenge to Satan on the battlefield calls 'worth' and 'excellence': 'God and Nature bid the same, / When he who rules is worthiest, and excels / Them whom he governs' (VI. 176–78). Abdiel here recalls Aristotle's claims that those gods among men who are 'pre-eminent in virtue [...]'

²⁵ See Steven Zwicker, 'Lines of Authority: Politics and Literary Culture in the Restoration', in *Politics of Discourse*, ed. by Kevin Sharpe and Steven Zwicker (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 230–70 (p. 255); Michael Wilding, *Dragons Teeth: Literature in the English Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 211, 219; Riebling, 'Milton on Machiavelli', p. 574; Himy 'Paradise Lost as a Republican "Tractatus Theological-Politicus"', pp. 119–20, 134; Lesjosne, 'Milton, Satan, Salmasius and Abdiel', p. 106; Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic*, pp. 463, 471; Lewalski, *Life of John Milton*, p. 466, and 'Paradise Lost and Milton's Politics'; Loewenstein, *Representing Revolution*, pp. 202–41; Smith, 'Paradise Lost from Civil War to Restoration', pp. 261–63; Michael Bryson, "His Tyranny Who Reigns": The Biblical Roots of Divine Kingship and Milton's Rejection of "Heav'n's King", *Milton Studies*, 43 (2004), 111–44.

²⁶ Stevie Davies, *Images of Kingship in 'Paradise Lost': Milton's Politics and Christian Liberty* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1983), p. 8.

should be kings in their state for life' and that 'all should joyfully obey such a ruler, according to what seems to be the order of nature' (P 1284b28–34; see also 1288a7–30). In addition, he recalls claims which Milton himself makes, though not consistently, in his political writings. In *A Defence of the People of England*, for example, he claims that 'it is not fitting nor worthy for a man to be king unless he far excels all the rest', and that there is 'no king by nature except he who excels all the rest in wisdom or courage'.²⁷ In the *Second Defence of the English People*, Milton digresses to deliver a panegyric on the 'most serene ruler of the Swedes', Queen Christina, on grounds of her 'well-nigh divine virtue and wisdom' which enabled her to see, among other things, that in the first *Defence*, Milton wrote against not kings and queens, but tyrants. The virtue of this Queen of the North qualifies her 'to attract others from every quarter as to the most brilliant exemplar of royal virtues and a heroine to be visited by all'. Indeed, 'having proved herself worthy of ruling, not Sweden but the whole earth, she can never lay aside her queenliness'. And in another passage rarely acknowledged by those critics who like to see Milton as an antimonarchist, Milton not only claims that the worthiest should rule, but also celebrates the Protectorate (which granted the Protector quasi-regal powers) on grounds that the man who held that office was the worthiest: 'there is nothing in human society more pleasing to God, or more agreeable to reason, nothing in the state more just, nothing more expedient, than the rule of the man most fit to rule. All know you to be that man, Cromwell!'²⁸

Restating Aristotle and Milton himself, Abdiel asserts not monarchy, but a principle that C. S. Lewis discussed under the rubric of 'hierarchy' and that later critics discuss under the term 'meritocracy'.²⁹ The principle is that it is in accordance with

²⁷ *A Defence of the People of England*, pp. 151, 153.

²⁸ *Second Defence of the English People*, pp. 603–06, 671–72. For Milton's support of the Protector on grounds that he was a kind of Machiavellian lawgiver, see Zera S. Fink, *The Classical Republicans* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1962), p. 106. For more recent debate over Milton's attitude towards Cromwell, see Austin Woolrych, 'Milton and Cromwell: "A Short But Scandalous Night of Interruption?"', in *Achievements of the Left Hand: Essays on the Prose of John Milton*, ed. by Michael Lieb and John T. Shawcross (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1974), pp. 185–218; Martin Dzelzainis, 'Milton and the Protectorate in 1658', in *Milton and Republicanism*, ed. by Armitage, Skinner, and Himy, pp. 181–205; Stevens, 'Milton's "Renunciation" of Cromwell'; Worden, *Literature and Politics in Cromwellian England*, pp. 218–325.

²⁹ See C. S. Lewis, *A Preface to Paradise Lost* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1942), pp. 73–81; Davies, *Images of Kingship*, p. 148; Mary Ann Radzinowicz, 'The Politics of *Paradise Lost*', in *Politics of Discourse*, ed. by Sharpe and Zwicker, pp. 204–29; Dittler Schulman, *Paradise Lost*

God, nature, and reason, and therefore right, for those who excel others, who have more merit than others, who are worthier than others, to rule them. This principle means that where one person excels the rest, the rule of one (monarchy) is right; where a small number of people excel the rest, the rule of the few (aristocracy) is right; and where all are equal, the rule of the many (constitutional government) is right. It means, on the other hand, that the rule of the one is not right where the one does not excel the ruled, that the rule of the few is not right when the few do not excel the ruled, and the rule of the many is not right where all are not equal. That is to say that Abdiel's political principles neither endorse nor reject unconditionally any particular form of government. Thus, on this principle, monarchy, in any given situation, may be either right or wrong — it depends on the relationship between the ruler and the ruled. In cases where the monarch does not excel the ruled, the entire political society violates the dictates of God, nature, and reason. In such cases, Abdiel suggests, because it would help bring about a political society that would conform with God, nature, and reason, rebellion against such a monarchy would be legitimate. Rebellion against a monarchy may thus also be either right or wrong, and its legitimacy, too, depends on the relationship between the monarch and the ruled. For God, Abdiel, and presumably all those who understand the universe of the poem, monarchy in heaven is right because the monarchs excel, have more merit, and are worthier than those whom they govern.

But in what does the excellence, merit, virtue, and worth of the monarchs in heaven, by virtue of which they legitimately hold office, consist? As the Son observes in his address to the faithful angels after their three days of war in heaven, Satan and the rebel angels think the excellence of God consists solely in what Satan frequently refers to as 'force' and what the Son here calls 'strength':

Therefore to mee thir doom he hath assign'd;
That they may have thir wish, to try with mee
In Battle which the stronger proves, they all,
Or I alone against them, since by strength
They measure all, of other excellence
Not emulous, nor care who them excels. (VI. 817–22)

Certainly, God is more powerful than Satan and the rebel angels, but whereas Satan thinks of God's power as a physical force that differs only quantitatively from his own power, and whereas he thinks that God simply has more of the same kind of

strength he has, God's power, as Joan Bennett observes, is of an entirely 'different quality' from that of Satan,³⁰ a fact which is made clear by the Son's driving the rebel angels out of heaven simply by appearing to them. Part of God's excellence consists in his power, but it is the kind of power by virtue of which God is not, as Satan thinks, merely the strongest kid on the block, but the one by virtue of which all kids on the block have and exert any power to begin with: 'I know thy strength, and thou know'st mine, / Neither our own but giv'n', as Michael informs Satan (VI. 1006–07). It is also the creative power by virtue of which, as Abdiel points out to Satan in their exchange in the north, Satan himself and all the other angels exist (V. 823–25). But as both the Son and Abdiel make clear, God's power is only part of his excellence. They, the narrator, the heavenly angels who keep singing his praise, Adam, and Eve all assert, though not to the satisfaction of all of the poem's readers, that the excellence of God, and therefore the legitimacy of his claim to the throne of heaven, also consists in his infinite and superior wisdom, reason, immortality, bounty, knowledge, goodness, reason, freedom, mercy, love, compassion, and justice. These are the qualities of God by virtue of which he excels and is worthier than those he rules, is a legitimate monarch in heaven and earth, and is worthy of being obeyed by all.

Though, in a sense, the Son is the father and possesses all of his qualities, his excellence is yet different in important ways from that of his father. Because, when he first informs the angels that he has begotten a son and appointed him their 'Head' (V. 606), God says nothing of his merit, one might infer that the Son shares the throne simply because he is the Son. That is to say that God's declaration of the Son as king in Book V gives the impression that the Son's merit is his blood and that monarchy in heaven is simply a hereditary monarchy. But that the Son's merit consists in more than his blood is made clear by the war in heaven which, it turns out, is managed by God in order to demonstrate to all the nature of the Son's worth and therefore the legitimacy of his being king. After two days of indecisive battle, God announces that

into thee such Virtue and Grace
Immense I have transfus'd, that all may know
In Heav'n and Hell thy Power above compare,
And this perverse Commotion govern'd thus,
To manifest thee worthiest to be Heir
Of all things, to be Heir and to be King
By Sacred Unction, thy deserved right. (VI. 703–09)

³⁰ Bennett, *Reviving Liberty*, p. 45.

The merit of the Son consists, in part, in the incomparable power which derives from the virtue and grace he has received from God and which, by driving the rebel angels from heaven for the reasons that God has instructed him to do so and that he counts it all his bliss to fulfill God's will, he manifests to all. By performing such 'Almighty Acts' (VI. 883) in front of the angels, the Son manifests to them his extraordinary worth and therefore his worthiness of being king. The centrality of obedience to the Son's worth, virtue, merit, and worthiness is established later in time, though earlier in the poem: after asking his father to allow him to pay the rigid satisfaction, the Son remains silent, 'but his meek aspect / Silent yet spake, and breath'd immortal love / To mortal men, above which only shone / Filial obedience' (III. 266–69). God explains the political significance of this act and attitude:

Because thou hast, though Thron'd in highest bliss
 Equal to God, and equally enjoying
 God-like fruition, quitted all to save
 A world from utter loss, and hast been found
 By Merit more than Birthright Son of God,
 Found worthiest to be so by being Good,
 Far more than Great or High; because in thee
 Love hath abounded more than Glory abounds,
 Therefore thy Humiliation shall exalt
 With thee thy Manhood also to this Throne;
 Here shalt thou sit incarnate, here shalt Reign
 Both God and Man, Son both of God and Man,
 Anointed universal King; (III. 305–17)

Even though at this moment in time he is already 'Thron'd' and enjoys 'Vice-gerent Reign' with his father (V. 609), even though he has already manifested his worthiness to be king, the Son yet clearly understands himself to be beneath the king and is motivated, above all, by the concern not to command and exert what he refers to as 'Regal Power' (V. 739) but to serve and obey it. It is this absolute commitment to serve not fallen mankind but God, in conjunction with his love of man and his unhesitating willingness to 'humiliate' or lower himself to become man and suffer death out of this love, that in God's eye constitutes the Son's merit and makes him what Abdiel calls a 'rightful King' (V. 818).

Milton's description of monarchy in heaven, then, demonstrates that monarchy as a form of government is in itself neither good nor bad, neither right nor wrong. The monarchy in heaven is right, that is to say in accordance with reason, God, and natural law, but this is because the monarchs there excel in various ways those whom they rule. Were the monarchs of heaven not to excel their subjects, the

monarchy would be wrong. We might infer from this that the description of monarchy in heaven is further evidence for Stephen Buhler's claim that 'throughout his works, Milton argues that meritocracy is the form of government most in accord with divine precept and with natural law'.³¹ We could improve upon this formulation, however, in two ways. First, meritocracy is not strictly speaking a form of government, since whereas the forms of government are defined in part in relation to the number of people holding political power, meritocracy is defined only in relation to their nature. Thus any of the three forms of government may be consistent with meritocracy: where merit lies with the many, meritocracy amounts to constitutional government; where it lies with the few, it amounts to aristocracy; where it lies with the one, it amounts to monarchy. God and Abdiel's commitments to excellence, virtue, worth, and merit as criteria for determining who legitimately holds political power, then, do not issue in a categorical repudiation of any of the traditional forms of government.

Second, it is important to note that the poem urges us to see that God and Abdiel are committed only to a certain kind of meritocracy. This is clear from the fact, evident at the opening of Book II, that Satan's government in hell is also a meritocratic monarchy:

High on a Throne of Royal State, which far
Outshone the wealth of *Ormus* and of *Ind*,
Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand
Show'rs on her Kings *Barbaric* Pearl and Gold,
Satan exalted sat, by merit rais'd
To that bad eminence; (II. 1–6)

Satan's government in hell is a travesty of the monarchy in heaven in the sense that it is a reduced and perverted instance of both the form of divine government and the principle by which those who hold office in that government claim legitimacy. For Satan is not just a king, but a king who, like the Son, has achieved his eminence by virtue of his 'merit', a fact which Satan himself points out in his opening address from his new throne (II. 21). The reason that God and Abdiel do not support this meritocracy is that it is grounded in a false notion of merit: rather than consisting in love, obedience, power deriving from divine grace, and actions performed out of them, Satan's merit consists in the will to absolute power, pride, envy, spite (but also courage and determination), and actions performed out of them. Milton's positive presentation of monarchy in heaven, then, constitutes an endorsement not

³¹ Buhler, 'Kingly States', p. 49.

of meritocracy but of meritocracy grounded in his idea of merit, an endorsement not of the monarchical form of government, but of a particular monarchy on grounds that it conforms with his meritocratic principles and his idea of merit. As we will see in the next chapter, the poem also affirms this monarchy on grounds that it is perfectly consistent with the civil liberty of those who serve it.

For Lejosne and many others, these dimensions of the heavenly monarchy do nothing to make monarchy legitimate on earth, since heaven is so radically different from earth that what is good government in heaven is bad government on earth.³² It follows from this argument that when Abdiel states that 'God and Nature bid the same, / When he who rules is worthiest, and excels / Them whom he governs' (VI. 176–78), he is asserting a principle which applies to angels but not to humans. Such a reading seems unreasonable, especially since humans, like the angels, are subject to both God and Nature, and since, rather than using more specific terms which would limit the applicability of the principle to angels, Abdiel uses the pronouns 'he' and 'them' which allow the principle to apply to people as well as angels. In addition, though Raphael introduces his account of Satan's rebellion against the divine monarchs by commenting on the difficulty of doing so in a way which Adam will understand, he also suggests that the difference between heaven and earth is perhaps not so great: 'though what if Earth / Be but the shadow of Heaven, and things therein / Each to other like, more than on Earth is thought?' (V. 574–76). This remark comes shortly after Raphael observes that the condition of angels is in fact, at least in some crucial respects, exactly the same as that of prelapsarian humans:

My self and all th' Angelic Host, that stand
In sight of God enthron'd, our happy state
Hold, as you yours, while our obedience holds;
On other surety none. (V. 535–38)

Flatly denying that heaven is so different from earth, Raphael here further supports a reading of Abdiel's observations on government as ones which hold on earth as they do in heaven. At the end of his description of this rebellion, moreover, Raphael hardly impresses upon Adam the difference between heaven and earth. He rather urges him to think of life in heaven as an example for life on earth: 'let it

³² See Lejosne, 'Milton, Satan, Salmasius and Abdiel', p. 106; Loewenstein, *Representing Revolution*, pp. 226–31; Lewalski, 'Paradise Lost and Milton's Politics', p. 151; Riebling, 'Milton on Machiavelli', p. 584; Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic*, p. 77. Many of these critics, however, also like to observe the similarities between heaven and earth when it suits them. See Walker, 'Resemblance and Reference'.

profit thee to have heard / By terrible Example the reward / Of disobedience' (VI. 909–11). If Satan's rebellion is to instruct Adam (and us) concerning human conduct, it does not seem unreasonable to suppose that Abdiel's loyalty, and the reasons he provides for it, may instruct us in human conduct as well (in some of his prose, Milton does in fact instruct us in this way). The kind of instruction this would amount to, however, is not, as many readers have thought, that monarchy is wrong for man, but that no particular form of government on earth *is* either right or wrong for him and that particular forms of government are *made* right or wrong by the relative merits of the particular governors and governed involved.

That Milton affirms the heavenly monarchy and presents the principles of heavenly politics as being appropriate on earth has appeared to many readers of the poem to be deeply problematic since they understand these principles to be 'monarchical' or 'royalist' and therefore at odds with the antiroyalist stance Milton takes in his political life and writings. Malcolm Mackenzie Ross, for example, felt that the monarchy in heaven signalled Milton's covert royalism which was fundamentally at odds with his overt political position.³³ In order to solve this difficulty, some critics have resorted to identifying the description of monarchy in heaven as an essentially figurative discourse the meaning of which does not include the problematical royalist ideology in which they feel a literal reading must issue. Concerned to refute Mackenzie Ross, Leland Ryken, for example, sees Milton's royalist terminology not as a literal account of God's rule but as a 'symbol' or 'image' to which Milton, like Raphael, resorts in order to make heavenly things comprehensible to human minds.³⁴ Stevie Davies is also inclined to divest the political discourse of heaven of a literal meaning applicable to earthly political life by reading it as an 'image' within a text that 'assimilates and transforms political structures with the visionary and liberating power of its poetry'.³⁵ And Robert Fallon solves the apparent problem by reading virtually *all* of the poem's political terminology as 'imagery' which issues in no political meaning whatsoever but simply serves the 'spiritual theme of the poetry'.³⁶

³³ Malcolm Mackenzie Ross, *Milton's Royalism: A Study of the Conflict of Symbol and Idea in the Poems* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1943; repr. 1970).

³⁴ Leland Ryken, *The Apocalyptic Vision in Paradise Lost* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1970), pp. 18–19.

³⁵ Davies, *Images of Kingship*, p. 6.

³⁶ Fallon, *Divided Empire*, p. 13. See also Lewis, *Preface*, p. 77. In his treatment of the issue, Howard Erskine-Hill reaffirms Ryken in claiming that Milton, like Raphael, 'may seek in the image of kingship the most appropriate and effective metaphor consistently to convey the nature of God

Given a better understanding of heavenly politics, however, the basic problem of inconsistency disappears, and there is thus less pressure to resort to severe hermeneutical measures which deny literal meaning to descriptions of God and the Son as kings; descriptions of the world as the empire and kingdom of God, the Son, and Satan; descriptions of events in the poem such as the coronation of the Son; and the political theorizing of Abdiel, God, and, in the final books, Adam and Michael. For though Milton's description of monarchy in heaven is royalist in the very basic sense that it affirms its legitimacy, it asserts neither that the monarchical form of government is superior to others, nor that a being derives legitimate political authority simply from holding the title or office of monarch, nor that all rebellions against monarchs are illegitimate, nor that monarchs are above the laws of God and nature (for, as beings of superior merit who rule others, God and Christ rule in accordance with the laws of God and nature), nor that the political authority of monarchs derives from God (for strictly speaking, God's legitimacy as monarch derives from his being of infinitely superior worth compared to all other beings). In several important respects, that is, the principles of Milton's monarchy are not royalist. They are *antiformalist* (in that they neither endorse nor reject any form of government in principle), *meritocratic* (in that they make merit that by which any being rules legitimately), and *Christian* (in that they incorporate Christian ideas of merit). These principles are thus consistent with opposition to earthly monarchs who are not pre-eminent in virtue and who violate reason, God's law, and the law of nature, and therefore consistent with the opposition to the Stuart monarchy as Milton saw it. It is because Milton affirms heavenly monarchy not because it is a monarchy but because God and the Son are the monarchs, and that he rejects the Stuart monarchy not because it is a monarchy but because the corrupt Stuarts are monarchs that Lewis is right when he says, 'the idea [...] that there is any logical inconsistency, or even any emotional disharmony, in asserting the monarchy of God and rejecting the monarchy of Charles II is a confusion'.³⁷ The claim that Milton's description of monarchy in heaven carries implications for earthly forms of government, then, does not pose the kind of problem some readers

and the image may have a Neoplatonic function', though he also notes that Milton acknowledged the literal kingship of the Messiah, in *Poetry and the Realm of Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 195. Norbrook also claims that the 'political registers' of the poem 'are used metaphorically to describe realms in which the *polis* is either irrelevant, as in heaven, or not yet in being, as in Eden', in *Writing the English Republic*, p. 436.

³⁷ Lewis, *Preface*, pp. 76–77. See also Dittler Schulman, '*Paradise Lost*' and the Rise of the American Republic, pp. 62–63.

of the poem feel it poses and therefore does not necessitate reading this description as some kind of figurative discourse intended to describe a reality entirely different from that following from its literal meaning.

* * *

As we have seen, Satan, too, is a king, and critics have thoroughly documented how he styles his monarchy on that of God and Christ, how he reigns in 'God-like imitated state' (II. 511). Some critics have, moreover, observed how Milton's representation of Satan resembles in important ways his description of Charles I in the regicide tracts.³⁸ But to infer from this that the poem is thereby presenting monarchy as an inherently pernicious form of government which is in all cases to be avoided would be as mistaken as inferring from the fact that there is gold in hell that gold is bad, inferring from the fact that there are towers in hell that towers are bad, or inferring from the fact that there is hierarchy in hell that hierarchy is bad. All of these inferences would be mistaken because they fail to recognize that monarchy, gold, towers, and hierarchy, all of which may be found in heaven, are in a very important respect like the Tree of Life on which Satan lands immediately after entering paradise:

Thence up he flew, and on the Tree of Life,
The middle Tree and highest there that grew,
Sat like a Cormorant; yet not true Life
Thereby regain'd, but sat devising Death
To them who liv'd; nor on the virtue thought
Of that life-giving Plant, but only us'd
For prospect, what well us'd had been the pledge
Of immortality. So little knows
Any, but God alone, to value right
The good before him, but perverts best things
To worst abuse, or to thir meanest use. (IV. 194–204)

Although the tree of life may be one of the 'best things', it may still be perverted and abused, which is precisely what Satan does here by using it as a roost from which to devise death and look for his prey. But the fact that Satan does pervert it to an abuse and evil use does not mean that there is anything wrong with it in itself, apart from this usage. This in fact would be impossible, as Stanley Fish observes in

³⁸ For Satan as monarch, see, for example, Davies, *Images of Kingship*, pp. 51–126; Wilding, *Dragons Teeth*, pp. 205–31; Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic*, pp. 453–54. For Satan as Charles I, see Merritt Hughes, 'Satan and the "Myth" of the Tyrant', in *Ten Perspectives on Milton* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), pp. 165–95; Bennett, *Reviving Liberty*, pp. 33–58; Loewenstein, *Representing Revolution*, pp. 203, 223.

his explanation of Milton's monism in this poem: 'since everything proceeds from God, everything is intrinsically valuable and nothing is to be rejected as if it were, in and of itself, the bearer of evil and error; this includes snakes, apples, trees, minerals, wine, women, and song'. Valuable simply by virtue of being part of God's creation, the tree of life may yet be improperly valued and used by those whose inner state is corrupt and thus become in a certain sense corrupted. The monarchical form of government, like the serpent and the tree of life, is just one more thing that, not in itself the bearer of evil, yet becomes so by virtue of the spirit in which Satan institutes it and the uses to which he puts it. But that it becomes so in the hands of Satan does not mean it is inherently or always so; it only means that *Satan's* monarchy is the bearer of evil. To think otherwise, to think that Satan's perversion of monarchical government — his tyranny — is a sign of some inherent perversion in that form of government itself, would be to fail to take into account the general theory of value by which the value of all things and forms derives from the fact they are made by God but may be subjected to different uses, purposes, and intentions. It would be to fail to take into account Abdiel's political principles which are essentially just the application of this general theory of value to forms of government. It would finally, at least on the poem's own terms, be to sin, since as Fish points out, 'to look for meaning in the phenomena themselves, as if they were their own cause and the independent determinants of their own value, is to mistake that which has been created for the creator, and the name of that mistake is idolatry'.³⁹

That Satan is a king does not prevent him from using the republican political discourse used by Milton and other supporters of the revolution. Like monarchical forms of government, this discourse is not a bearer of evil in itself but can become so by virtue of being appropriated by an evil agent. This is in fact what occurs when, for example, Satan urges the fallen angels in hell to fight for liberty against servitude, slavery, and tyranny; when he volunteers for a mission of such great 'public moment' (II. 448); when he resolves to ruin man out of consideration for 'public reason just' (IV. 389); and when he tells Gabriel he has come to earth out of consideration for the welfare of his 'afflicted powers' (IV. 939). Satan's use of the language of the good old cause in these passages is conspicuous, but, as many critics have pointed out, the poem also makes clear in many different ways that Satan uses this language not out of a genuine concern for the public good, but essentially to

³⁹ Stanley Fish, 'Preface to the Second Edition', in *Surprised by Sin*, pp. xx, xvi. Fish is here elaborating on claims about *Paradise Lost* he first made in this book.

pursue his self-interest which is grounded in pride, ambition, spite, envy, and revenge. It is clear, in short, that in using republican discourse, Satan would, as Gabriel puts it, only 'seem / Patron of liberty' (IV. 957–58). It may be, as Worden and others have argued, that Satan's specious republican discourse reflects an intention on Milton's part to express some criticism of the English republicans, including himself, led by Cromwell, just as Satan's monarchy may reflect an intention to discredit the Stuart monarchy.⁴⁰ But, again, to think that Satan's appropriation of republican discourse and Milton's criticism of particular republicans means that there is something inherently wrong with that discourse or the free republics in the service of which its sincere users wield it would be as mistaken as thinking that Satan's false monarchy signals the evil of monarchies in general, or that his use of the tree of life to devise death and hunt man signals the evil of that tree. When we acknowledge the poem's insistence that things which in and of themselves are indifferent or even good may be used to do evil, we see, as Norbrook claims, that the diabolic usage of republican language 'should not discredit the language itself, merely the context in which it becomes the vehicle for tyrannical speech-acts',⁴¹ or perhaps more precisely, the performer of those acts. Just as monarchies are not evil in and of themselves, so republican discourse and republics are not good in and of themselves — like everything else, monarchies, republics, and republican slogans can be right or wrong, good or bad, constructive or destructive, depending on the spirit in which they are administered or used.

* * *

Milton's treatment of postlapsarian earthly politics in the final books of the poem confirms these implications of heavenly and hellish politics. When Michael leads Adam to the top of the highest hill in paradise, they can see 'wherever stood / City of old or modern Fame, the Seat / Of mightiest Empire' (XI. 385–87), and the narrator describes these seats of empire as the seats of various kings, moguls, and czars. But the narrator then clearly indicates that these kings and empires are *not* going to be the essential matter of postlapsarian history as Michael presents it to Adam: 'but to nobler sights / *Michael* from *Adam's* eyes the Film remov'd' (XI. 411–12). Michael does indeed turn to sights which are different from those of kings and kingdoms: Cain killing Abel; a lazar-house; the life and death of the temperate man; the sons of Seth and daughters of Cain; Enoch's virtue and his

⁴⁰ See Worden, 'Milton's Republicanism and the Tyranny of Heaven'; Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic*, pp. 438–67; Loewenstein, *Representing Revolution*, pp. 202–41.

⁴¹ Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic*, pp. 454–55.

opposition to warring factions; Noah's virtue and his survival of the flood. But it is hardly the case that 'everywhere monarchy rears its head';⁴² on the contrary, details of corrupt kings and kingdoms are markedly absent from this part of Michael's presentation of history. When, moreover, Adam responds to these visions, and Michael corrects and guides him towards a proper understanding of them, they are not concerned with politics and forms of government. They are concerned mainly with Adam's sin, its terrible consequences, heroism, fame, the relations between men and women, God's justice, the significance of place, and God's covenant with man. Because neither the particular 'scenes' from history nor the commentary upon them deal in any significant way with the forms of government, Book XI provides scant evidence for the view that Milton's presentation of human history issues in a 'rejection of kingship', or the view that it issues in a recommendation of republics. The issue of monarchies and republics is rather quite beside the point in this book.

As Michael proceeds to reveal postdiluvian human history to Adam by way of narration in Book XII, however, evil kings, such as Nimrod and the pharaoh, are more prominent, and both he and Adam become much more concerned with political issues. But that the rule of the one will not be vilified here by Michael becomes clear when Michael begins his account of the descendants of Noah and the people of Israel. For he clearly approves of Noah, to whom he refers as 'the Patriarch [...] who scap'd the Flood' (XII. 117), and his early descendants, who led their lives 'With some regard to what is just and right', living 'in peace by Families and Tribes / Under paternal rule' (XII. 16, 23–24). Though the 'Nation' of Israel does not yet exist, nor any national governments, there is in these early days a form of just government or 'rule' over families and tribes which is exercised by a single person — the father. And when, by virtue of God's selection, the nation of Israel does come into existence, it is 'A Nation from one faithful man to spring' (XII. 113). This one faithful man is Abraham, and by referring to him also as 'This Patriarch blest' (XII. 151), Michael reminds us that in its very earliest stages, Israel, too, may be said to be under the rule of a single man who is in a literal sense also the father of the people. When the last patriarch, Moses, finally leads the chosen race out of Egypt into the wilderness, however, patriarchal rule is abandoned and the national government is more formally instituted along other lines: 'there they shall found / Thir government, and thir great Senate choose / Through the twelve Tribes, to rule by Laws ordain'd' (XII. 224–26).

⁴² Zwicker, 'Lines of Authority', p. 259.

For some readers of the poem, the fact that the people of Israel at this time are ruled not by a single man but by a 'senate' is a firm indication that the poem endorses a republican form of government. But as Cedric Brown observes, 'Milton does not here say what less cautious spirits might have said, that *the* form of government was inaugurated in the wilderness. He says that it was "their" government, an arrangement appropriate to that nation at that time, with that nation's special relationship with God'.⁴³ Even if the form of the government of Israel at this time is understood as a republic, that is, Michael is far from recommending it to nations at large. But that this form of government is not really republican anyway is clear from just how special the relationship between God and the people of Israel at this time really is. As Michael goes on to indicate, though the senate rules by ordained laws, it is God who ordains them:

God from the Mount of *Sinai*, whose gray top
Shall tremble, he descending, will himself
In Thunder, Lightning and loud Trumpet's sound
Ordain them Laws; part such as appertain
To civil Justice, part religious Rites
Of sacrifice [. . .]. (XII. 227–32)

Since the civil and religious laws by which the senate rules are not ordained by the senate but by God, since God holds legislative power in this government, Israel at this time is not really a republic, but a theocracy. As Milton observes in the first *Defence*, 'the king of the people was Jehovah; Moses was, as it were, only an interpreter of Jehovah the king'.⁴⁴ It is thus not the case that God's delight in those who obeyed his will embodied in these laws and rites (XII. 244–46) amounts to his approval of republics, and certainly not republics such as those supported by Milton, ones in which Church and state are separate.

As Michael continues to attend to the history of government in Israel, monarchy does indeed rear its head, but not in a way that supports the thesis of critics such as Zwicker and Bryson. After the people of Israel begin to sin and fight the enemies God raises against them, God

saves them penitent
By Judges first, then under Kings; of whom
The second, both for piety renown'd

⁴³ Cedric Brown, 'Great Senates and Godly Education: Politics and Cultural Renewal in Some Pre- and Post-Revolutionary Texts of Milton', in *Milton and Republicanism*, ed. by Armitage, Skinner, and Himy, pp. 43–60 (p. 48).

⁴⁴ *A Defence of the People of England*, p. 100.

And puissant deeds, a promise shall receive
 Irrevocable, that his Regal Throne
 For ever shall endure; the like shall sing
 All Prophecy, That of the Royal Stock
 Of *David* (so I name this King) shall rise
 A Son, the Woman's Seed to thee foretold,
 Foretold to *Abraham*, as in whom shall trust
 All Nations, and to Kings foretold, of Kings
 The last, for of his Reign shall be no end. (XII. 319–30)

This passage is important as much for what it shows Michael does not do as for what it shows he does. Michael here does not call upon the Old Testament passage which Milton cites in the regicide tracts and *The Ready and Easy Way* and which posed a problem for royalists such as Dryden throughout the Restoration. He does not invoke, that is to say, I Samuel 8–12 which describes how the people of Israel, unhappy with being ruled by judges under God, request a human king, how this request constitutes a rejection of God's reign, how Samuel prophecies the corruption of the first king and the suffering of the people under him, and how Samuel calls upon God to subject the people to thunder and rain, 'that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of the lord, in asking you a king'.⁴⁵ Neither does Michael observe the offences committed by that first king, Saul, offences which in *Eikonoklastes* and elsewhere Milton likes to cite as analogues to those committed by Charles I.⁴⁶ At this moment in his narrative, that is to say, Michael passes up a golden opportunity to denigrate kingship simply by continuing to narrate the history of Israel. Were the project of the final books to reject kingship, this would be nothing short of a glaring omission, even allowing for the problem of censorship, for elsewhere in the poem Milton does not hesitate to refer to the decadence of Solomon and the evil of Jeroboam and other Old Testament kings (I. 444, 484). What Michael does is to assert how, whether Israel be under judges or kings, God saves them, as if the particular form of government

⁴⁵ For Milton's reference to this passage, see *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, pp. 14, 32; *Eikonoklastes*, p. 580; the entire second chapter of *A Defence of the People of England; The Ready and Easy Way*, pp. 885, 893–94. But note that besides using the passage to show that God counted it a sin in the people to want a human king, Milton also uses it in the regicide tracts to support his argument that God left humans free to choose whatever form of government they wanted, including monarchy. This is one of several reasons it is mistaken to claim, as Eric Nelson does, that in these tracts Milton repudiates monarchy. See Nelson, "Talmudical Commonwealthsmen" and the Rise of Republican Exclusivism', *Historical Journal*, 50 (2007), 809–35.

⁴⁶ *Eikonoklastes*, pp. 429, 434, 491.

in Israel is beside the point. In addition, Michael here makes the institution of monarchy in Israel an occasion for celebrating two earthly kings: David and the Son. In so doing, he makes clear that monarchy can be a legitimate form of government for both particular human societies at certain times and humanity at large, and that it does not take the Son to make it legitimate: a man 'for piety renown'd / And puissant deeds', such as David, is good enough.

Whereas Michael and Adam do not talk politics in their discussions of history in Book XI, they do in Book XII, but to interpret this discussion as issuing in a rejection of particular forms of government simply fails to recognize the real target of the criticism. Though Genesis refers to Nimrod as 'a mighty hunter' who has a kingdom, Michael does not identify him as a king but emphasizes that his arrogation of power over his brethren and his use of force to keep them in subjection make him a tyrant: he hunts 'With War and hostile snare such as refuse / Subjection to his Empire tyrannous', and 'with a crew, whom like Ambition joins / With him or under him to tyrannize', he builds the tower of Babel (XII. 31–39). Besides criticizing him not for being a king but for being a tyrant, Michael is also clearly critical of the way in which Nimrod justifies his arrogation of power: 'from Heav'n claiming second Sovranty' (XII. 35). It is with this second dimension of Nimrod's rule that Adam is mainly concerned when he responds:

O execrable Son so to aspire
Above his Brethren, to himself assuming
Authority usurpt, from God not giv'n:
He gave us only over Beast, Fish, Fowl
Dominion absolute; that right we hold
By his donation; but Man over men
He made not Lord; such title to himself
Reserving, human left from human free. (XII. 64–71)

Adam is here decrying not monarchy but merely Nimrod's political aspirations, his claim to be lord and have absolute dominion over other men, and his justification of this claim by divine right or donation. But in saying that political authority over men does not derive from God, that man receives from God absolute dominion over the animals, and that God leaves men free, Adam is *not* saying that no one legitimately exercises authority over others. Neither is he saying that free human beings may not choose to grant such authority over themselves to others, or that they must not choose to grant such authority to the one (as the Israelites did). Adam is not, that is, repudiating the principle he affirms in the first *Defence* and elsewhere that both God and nature grant humans the power to establish whatever

form of government they wish, and that that power is the foundation of all civil liberty:

And so it is for the wisest men to ascertain what is most fitting and useful for the people. For it is agreed that the same form of government does not suit every people nor the same people all the time, but sometimes this form, sometimes that one, accordingly as the virtue and industry of the citizens sometimes increases and sometimes diminishes. But whoever removes from a people their power of choosing for themselves the form of government they want, removes for certain that in which civil liberty is almost wholly rooted.⁴⁷

Congratulating Adam for his abhorrence of Nimrod, Michael proceeds to inform him that as a consequence of the fall, reason in man is 'obscur'd or not obey'd', and that instead of reason, 'inordinate desires' and 'upstart Passions' rule the soul and 'to servitude reduce / Man till then free'. 'Know withal', Michael sternly informs Adam, 'Since thy original lapse, true Liberty / Is lost' (XII. 82–90). It appears as though, as a consequence of the fall, liberty is forever lost and servitude is the permanent condition of the human soul. We have seen, however, that Michael also suggests that man may have some power to escape this condition: if man simply *disobeys* reason within himself, it seems possible that he could obey it if he so chose, and if, as Michael goes on to say, 'hee *permits*' passion and appetite to overrule reason, it would seem that man has it within his power not to permit this. But whether inner servitude is the unalterable condition in which man is placed as a result of the fall, or whether it is a condition in which he, as a result of the fall and his own ongoing permission which he is capable of denying, is placed, this is his inward condition. Michael makes clear the outward, political consequences of this fact:

Therefore since hee permits
Within himself unworthy Powers to reign
Over free Reason, God in Judgment just
Subjects him from without to violent Lords;
Who oft as undeservedly enthrall
His outward freedom: Tyranny must be,
Though to the Tyrant thereby no excuse. (XII. 90–96)

Michael here teaches Adam that God suffers man to lose his outward freedom under government as just punishment for his loss of inward freedom, though he does not clearly indicate whether God does this from time to time or always. In so doing, he brings the major theoretical discussion of politics in the final books to a

⁴⁷ *A Defence of the People of England*, p. 121; see also pp. 80, 94, 114, 150–51; *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, pp. 13, 32–33.

close by returning to the essential offence of Nimrod, which is not that he is a single person ruler but that he claims political power on false grounds and uses force to deprive the governed of their outward freedom — that he ‘tyrannizes’ (if others tyrannize ‘*with him*’, he would really be an oligarch). Again, one might argue that, given Milton’s situation, he could not safely be more explicit, and that he means king when he cries ‘tyrant’. The problem with such a move is that it violates the affirmations of particular heavenly and earthly kings in the poem, and the literal meaning of the passage. We can avoid this problem by reading literally and understanding the political teaching of the poem at this point to be not that monarchies are wrong and republics right for men, but that the rule of the *depraved* one is for that one inexcusable, however necessary it may be.

At this point it may appear that there is at least one form of government which Milton wants us to think of as being in and of itself bad or wrong — tyranny. But this is not really the case since, strictly speaking, the form of tyranny is the same as that of monarchy: in both cases, a single person rules. This is at least clear in Milton’s classical sources, such as Aristotle, who, as we have seen, defines tyranny not as a distinct form of government, but as a monarchy administered with a bad intention. It is also clear on some occasions in the prose: ‘a Tyrant whether by wrong or by right comming to the Crown, is he who regarding neither Law nor the common good, reigns onely for himself and his faction’.⁴⁸ The poem’s execration of tyranny, then, amounts not to an execration of a distinct form of government, not at least as these forms are classically defined, but only to a certain kind of single-person rule, one which fails the test of merit. It is thus consistent with Abdiel’s political principles. But even if tyranny is thought of as a distinct form, it still is not identified by the poem as a kind of government which is in all cases inappropriate and unjust. For, as John Rogers observes, Michael’s commentary on Nimrod here indicates that tyranny on earth is in fact what God’s justice demands, at least from time to time, as punishment for man’s relegation of himself to a condition of inner servitude.⁴⁹ Tyranny is thus right for postlapsarian human societies in the sense that, following from God’s ‘Judgment just’, it is a form of just punishment. And given that this is the case, it is not surprising that Milton here neither affirms a

⁴⁸ *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, p. 16.

⁴⁹ Rogers, *Matter of Revolution*, pp. 162–63. For tyranny as punishment, see also the passage in Milton’s commonplace book, where, apparently drawing on Thomas Smith’s *De Republica Anglorum* (1583), he writes that once the classical Romans had grown corrupt, they ‘were either for thire profit, or thire punishment fit to be curb’d with a lordly and dreadfull monarchy’. *Commonplace Book*, with notes, preface and translation by Ruth Mohl, p. 420.

theory of armed resistance nor attempts to evade the teachings of Peter and Paul on submission to the powers that be — as he does in the major political prose.⁵⁰

This means that if as a result of his fall Adam's descendants are irrevocably placed in a state of inner servitude, and if God's justice demands that he be *constantly* punished for this fact, then the right and just form of government for them is *never* the republic but *always* something more like Satan's monarchy, though this is hardly something for which they should strive. A non-tyrannical form of government such as a republic or a true monarchy would be a legitimate form of government *for them* only if God's just punishment consisted in subjecting them to tyranny not perpetually but from time to time, or if they could cease permitting passion and desire from overruling reason within themselves and thereby remove themselves out of that state of inner servitude for which they deserve to be punished.

* * *

In *Paradise Lost*, Milton does not repudiate monarchy but implies that the legitimacy of any form of government in any particular situation is contingent upon the nature of that situation, where the relevant features of that situation will include the ethical standing of the governors and the governed. Because, on these grounds, Milton affirms some monarchies and condemns others, this poem's teaching on the forms of government is consistent in important respects with the regicide tracts, *The History of Britain*,⁵¹ and the thinking of major figures in the tradition of

⁵⁰ See Romans 13 and I Peter 2. On the importance of these passages, see Quentin Skinner, *The Age of Reformation*, vol. II of *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp. 15–16. For Milton's attempt to make them consistent with armed resistance to tyrants, see *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, pp. 15–16; *A Defence of the People of England*, pp. 110–16.

⁵¹ One seeks in vain for a clear repudiation of monarchy in Milton's history of the Britons and Saxons during their first millennium under monarchy. There is criticism of bad kings and praise of good kings, where good kings are defined mainly in terms of the virtues of prudence, wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice. Indeed, Milton claims that once England was united 'under the power of one man', the worthy West-Saxon king Ecbert, 'men might with some reason have expected from such Union, peace and plenty, greatness, and the flourishing of all Estates and Degrees' (*The History of Britain*, p. 257). They might reasonably have done so because, for Milton, monarchy is in no way incompatible with peace, plenty, greatness, and national flourishing. That the Britons and Saxons did not in fact enjoy these things under Ecbert is, according to Milton's account, not because the nation was ruled by a king, but because the Danes so fiercely attacked it, and the nation at large was 'fitted by thir own vices for no condition but servile' (p. 259). Milton here wonders if the Saxons might have repelled the Danes and Normans more effectively had they been under several independent princes rather than one king, but he then observes that even after

republican political thought. It is also entirely consistent with the antiformalist constitutional thought of Cromwell and other English ‘republicans’ which is observed by J. C. Davis, Jonathan Scott, Johann Sommerville, and others.⁵² Rather than distancing the poem from the prose, republican tradition, and English republicanism — which is what most Miltonists writing on this issue are bound to think — Milton’s antiformalist treatment of the forms of government aligns him with it. This is not to say, however, that Milton’s treatment of the forms of government in this poem is dictated by the republican texts which he knew, or that the teaching of the poem on this subject is an expression of ‘Milton’s republicanism’. For, unlike ancient and Machiavellian republicans, Milton understands tyranny as just punishment inflicted by the Christian God on his depraved creatures, and he at times suggests that mankind may be so depraved that a republican form of government may often not be appropriate for it. He affirms a Christian conception of the merit relevant to rule. And he says nothing of the mixed constitution. Though, as Dzelzainis has argued, the mixed constitution may not be as central to the political prose as Zera Fink claimed, it is still important to observe that, citing Polybius as his authority, Milton explicitly affirms it in his discussion of the English constitution in the early prose tract, *Of Reformation* (1641).⁵³ In the first

the ‘lesser Kingdoms’ had revolted against Ecbert, they still failed to repel the Viking invasion (pp. 258–59). There is, moreover, no indication that being subject to kings was the cause of the corruption of national morals at this time. One of the only moments where Milton in this work comes anywhere near explicitly rejecting monarchy is in his retelling of a story about Canute with the aim of showing ‘the small power of Kings in respect of God’ (pp. 365–66).

⁵² See J. C. Davis, ‘Cromwell’s Religion’, in *Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution*, ed. by John Morrill (London: Longman, 1990), pp. 181–208; Davis, ‘Against Formality: One Aspect of the English Revolution’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th series, 3 (1993), 265–88; Johann Sommerville, ‘Oliver Cromwell and English Political Thought’, in *Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution*, ed. by Morrill, pp. 234–58; David Smith, ‘The Struggle for New Constitutional and Institutional Forms’, in *Revolution and Restoration: England in the 1650s*, ed. by John Morrill (London: Collins and Brown, 1992), pp. 15–34; Worden, ‘Milton’s Republicanism and the Tyranny of Heaven’, pp. 228–29; Worden, ‘English Republicanism’, pp. 447–48, 469; Worden, ‘Republicanism, Regicide and Republic: The English Experience’, in *Republicanism and Constitutionalism in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by van Gelderen and Skinner, pp. 307–27; Mark Kishlansky, *A Monarchy Transformed: Britain 1603–1714* (New York: Penguin, 1996), pp. 190–91; Scott, *Commonwealth Principles*, pp. 131–50.

⁵³ *Of Reformation*, p. 599. For Fink’s assertion of the importance of the mixed constitution to Milton’s political thought from 1641 to the Restoration, see *Classical Republicans*. For Dzelzainis’s critique of Fink, see his ‘Milton’s Classical Republicanism’, and ‘Republicanism’, in *A Companion to Milton*, ed. by Thomas Corns (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), pp. 294–308 (pp. 298–300). But see

Defence, Milton allies himself with Plato and Aristotle who praised that 'very wise king of old', Lycurgus, and Theopompus, on grounds that these kings of Sparta established stable, peaceful, and long-lasting reigns by way of a mixed constitutional arrangement. When he considers the constitutional history of Britain in Chapter 8 of this work, he begins by citing with approval Thomas Smith who, in his *De Republica Anglorum*, asserted that the constitution of England was mixed. Drawing parallels between the mixed constitution of the Roman republic, which granted royal power to the two consuls, and the English constitution, Milton proceeds to observe that the constitution of England had always been mixed in the sense that political powers were shared by the king and parliament, England's 'senate'.⁵⁴ In the second *Defence*, Milton again refers to Sparta as 'a state endowed with an excellent constitution'.⁵⁵ This affirmation of the mixed constitution on grounds that it is favourable to civil liberty and long-term political stability, an affirmation that is a defining feature of republican constitutional thought, does not appear in the epic poem.

Finally, even where Milton's thinking about the forms of government is consistent with the ancient and Florentine republicans, it is not necessarily indebted to them. For, as Fish has shown in his work on Milton over the last thirty-five years, the commitment to evaluating form not on grounds of its observable external features but on grounds of the circumstances in which it comes into being and exists governs Milton's evaluation of form of all kinds.⁵⁶ The main reason that this is so is not that Milton had read his Livy and Machiavelli, or discussed the forms of government with the first major English theorist of the republic, Marchamont

also Janel Mueller who describes Milton's early republicanism as expressed in *Of Reformation* in terms of a commitment to a mixed constitution, in 'Contextualizing Milton's Nascent Republicanism', in *Of Poetry and Politics: New Essays on Milton and his World*, ed. by P. G. Stanwood (Binghamton: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1995), pp. 263–82.

⁵⁴ See *A Defence of the People of England*, pp. 130, 179, 198. For observed parallels between the ancient British constitution and the mixed Roman republican constitution, see pp. 203, 208, 210, 215, 221. There is also Milton's positive reference in Chapter 9 (pp. 224–25) to Sir John Fortescue's theory of regal and political power which, according to James Blythe, 'provides one of the most important bridges between medieval and early modern mixed constitutionalism' (*Ideal Government and the Mixed Constitution*, p. 260).

⁵⁵ *Second Defence of the English People*, p. 577.

⁵⁶ See Stanley Fish, 'Aesthetic, Milton's', in *The Milton Encyclopaedia*, ed. by William Hunter (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1978), pp. 28–29; Fish, 'Introduction: Going Down the Antiformalist Road', in *Doing What Comes Naturally* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989), pp. 1–33; Fish, *How Milton Works*, throughout.

Nedham, but that he had read his Bible in the context of a militantly Protestant culture and was therefore held by the Pauline doctrine of faith which he understood to mean, as he puts it in *Of Christian Doctrine*, that 'faith [...] is the form of good works'.⁵⁷ Milton's teaching on the forms of government in *Paradise Lost*, that is, is also entirely consistent with his commitment to the spirit as the source of whatever value human works and forms may have, a commitment by virtue of which he and many of his allies took themselves to be true Protestants. His position on the forms of government is thus different in important ways from that of the republicans; where it is the same, it is consistent with the antiformalism that he and many other English Protestants felt was demanded by their faith.

⁵⁷ *Of Christian Doctrine*, p. 639.

CIVIL LIBERTY

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Matthew 5. 10–11

Republican Tradition

While there is a strong consensus amongst scholars of the republican tradition of political thought that a theory of civil liberty is an essential element of the tradition, there is profound disagreement over what this theory is and who asserts it. Drawing on his understanding of Aristotle as a foundational figure of the tradition, Pocock, for example, claims that

the republican vocabulary employed by *dictatores*, rhetoricians and humanists articulated the positive conception of liberty: it contended that *homo*, the *animale politicum*, was so constituted that his nature was completed only in a *vita activa* practiced in a *vivere civile*, and that *libertas* consisted in freedom from restraints upon the practice of such a life. Consequently, the city must have *libertas* in the sense of *imperium*, and the citizen must be participant in the *imperium* in order to rule and be ruled.¹

In his early highly influential essays on the subject, Quentin Skinner agrees with Pocock that the Aristotelian notion of man as a political animal implies a theory of positive liberty. He claims that the Aristotelian tradition of thought about social freedom is founded on two premises. The first is

¹ J. G. A. Pocock, 'Virtues, Rights, and Manners: A Model for Historians of Political Thought', in *Virtue, Commerce, and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 40–41.

that we are moral beings with certain characteristically human purposes. The second, later taken up in particular by scholastic political philosophy, adds that the human animal is *naturale sociale et politicum*, and thus that our purposes must be essentially social in character. The view of human freedom to which these assumptions give rise is thus a 'positive' one. We can only be said to be fully or genuinely at liberty, according to this account, if we actually engage in just those activities which are most conducive to *eudaimonia* or 'human flourishing', and may therefore be said to embody our deepest human purposes.²

Skinner, however, differs from Pocock, for though he concedes that the revival of Aristotelianism was of great importance for the evolution of republican thought,³ he argues that the Aristotelian theory of social freedom is alien to republican and neo-Roman tradition. Rejecting Aristotelian assumptions about *eudaimonia* and human nature, the republicans 'never appeal to a positive view of social freedom. They never argue, that is, that we are moral beings with certain determinate purposes, and thus that we are only in the fullest sense in possession of our liberty when these purposes are realized'. The classical and Renaissance republicans rather assert a 'theory of negative liberty' according to which 'the idea of liberty is equated with the mere absence of impediments to the realization of one's chosen ends'.⁴ Liberty is seen to be valuable by these authors because it is seen to be a precondition of citizens achieving the ends they set for themselves, and because value inheres in citizens achieving these ends. In addition, Skinner sees these authors pretty much agreeing that people enjoy this kind of liberty only when they live within a political community which is free in this sense as well, free, that is, from constraints imposed by individual citizens or other political communities upon its pursuit of its chosen ends. In order for this kind of community to exist, the theory goes, it is necessary to have a particular kind of constitution, a non-monarchical one under which the citizens of the community have the power to elect individuals to judicial and political offices, the tenure and powers of which are specified by the laws of the community. It is also necessary for those citizens to have certain characteristics, or virtues, such as courage, wisdom, prudence, temperance, and, above all, justice. While some citizens might develop these virtues on the basis of their own reasoning about themselves as human beings, most would not. In order to promote the virtues that are required to ensure the liberty of citizens and the political society at large, the rulers of that society must resort to the coercive powers of civil law. Presenting this theory of negative liberty, Skinner argues, both

² Skinner, 'Republican Ideal of Political Liberty', p. 296.

³ Skinner, 'Rediscovery of Republican Values', pp. 37–38.

⁴ Skinner, 'Republican Ideal of Political Liberty', pp. 306, 299.

classical and Florentine republicans depart from the theory of positive liberty which Pocock sees as being central to republican tradition from Aristotle on.⁵

In his more recent treatment of this issue, however, Skinner complicates this account by emphasizing that these historians also understand civil liberty in terms of what Philip Pettit calls 'nondomination'.⁶ Skinner claims that this idea of liberty follows from the way in which the *Digest* of Roman law distinguishes between free men and legal slaves. According to this work, slavery is

'an institution of the *ius gentium* by which someone is, contrary to nature, subjected to the dominion of someone else'. This in turn is said to yield a definition of individual liberty. If everyone in a civil association is either bond or free, then a *civis* or free subject must be someone who is not under the dominion of anyone else, but is *sui iuris*, capable of acting in their own right. It likewise follows that what it means for someone to lack the status of a free subject must be for that person not to be *sui iuris* but instead to be *sub potestate*, under the power or subject to the will of someone else.⁷

Thus, besides thinking of political liberty as the absence of interference with the citizens' pursuit of their chosen ends, the classical republicans also think of it as the condition of not being within the power of someone else. As Skinner puts it in a recent essay on Milton, the essential 'classical assumption' about civil liberty is that it 'is to be contrasted not with actual but with possible constraint'.⁸ This way of putting it makes it appear as though Skinner might wish to abandon entirely his earlier argument that the classical republicans and their descendants (including 'neo-Roman' theorists who do not repudiate monarchical forms of government as republicans do) think of liberty as non-interference, the absence of actual constraint. But in these later essays he explicitly asserts that the principal early modern western European figures who reassert the classical republican theory of liberty are

⁵ See Skinner, 'Machiavelli on *virtù* and the Maintenance of Liberty'; 'Idea of Negative Liberty'; 'Republican Ideal of Political Liberty'; 'Machiavelli's *Discorsi* and the Pre-humanist Origins of Republican Ideas'; 'Rediscovery of Republican Values'.

⁶ Pettit understands domination as a relationship in which 'the dominating party can interfere on an arbitrary basis with the choices of the dominated: can interfere, in particular, on the basis of an interest or an opinion that need not be shared by the person affected. The dominating party can practice interference, then, at will and with impunity: they do not have to seek anyone's leave and they do not have to incur any scrutiny or penalty'. Liberty as non-domination, then, consists not in the absence of forms of interference with the lives of the citizens, but in the absence of an agent that could, if it so wished, constrain them at will with impunity. See Pettit, *Republicanism*, pp. 19–20.

⁷ Skinner, 'Classical Liberty, Renaissance Translation and the English Civil War', p. 313.

⁸ Quentin Skinner, 'John Milton and the Politics of Slavery', in *Milton and the Terms of Liberty*, ed. by Graham Parry and Joad Raymond (Cambridge: Brewer, 2002), pp. 1–22 (p. 299).

also theorists of negative liberty. His claim thus appears to be that the classical republicans think of liberty as both non-interference and non-domination, though this is not as clear as one might wish.⁹ Thus, Skinner now sees Sallust, Livy, and Tacitus (along with Cicero and Seneca) as proponents of a 'theory' of civil liberty that is fundamentally different from the theory of liberty presented within Aristotelian tradition. Skinner also draws a contrast between the classical republican theory of freedom and the view that the enjoyment of political freedom is essentially 'the unconstrained enjoyment of a number of specific civil rights'.¹⁰ The ancient Roman theory of civil liberty is rather grounded in an understanding of liberty simply in terms of the absence of actual and possible constraints on citizens' pursuits of their chosen ends. It is this theory which Skinner sees not just Renaissance Italians such as Machiavelli but also early seventeenth-century English parliamentarians, and defenders of the regicide and commonwealth such as John Milton, revising and reaffirming.

There are, then, major differences between some of the leading accounts of what the republicans think about liberty and how Aristotle and liberalism are related to republican tradition.¹¹ One way of resolving some of them and moving towards a clearer understanding of republican views on civil liberty, in relation to which we may position Milton's thinking about civil liberty in *Paradise Lost*, is by considering how these accounts stand up to the ways in which the major republicans use

⁹ See Skinner, *Liberty Before Liberalism*, pp. 83–84, and 'John Milton and the Politics of Slavery', where he claims that 'Milton stresses that liberty is jeopardized not merely by actual but by possible constraint' (p. 303). In 'Machiavelli on *virtù* and the Maintenance of Liberty', Skinner claims that his point is that 'non-domination is a species of negative liberty' (p. 178). Pettit observes that Skinner now says that for republicans freedom 'means nondomination and noninterference', in 'Keeping Republican Freedom Simple: On a Difference with Quentin Skinner', *Political Theory*, 30 (2002), 339–56 (p. 342). That there is no contradiction in thinking of freedom in terms of both the absence of restraint (non-interference) and non-domination and therefore no need to choose between them is shown by Steven Wall in 'Freedom, Interference and Domination', *Political Studies*, 49 (2001), 216–30. For further problems identifying Skinner's current position, see Sullivan, *Machiavelli, Hobbes, and the Formation of a Liberal Republicanism*, pp. 22–276.

¹⁰ Skinner, *Liberty Before Liberalism*, pp. 18–19.

¹¹ Some political philosophers object to a premise of much of this debate, namely, that the republicans espouse a special concept of civil liberty that is distinct from other concepts of civil liberty. See Gerald MacCallum, Jr, 'Negative and Positive Freedom', in *Philosophy, Politics, and Society*, 4th series, ed. by Peter Laslett, W. G. Runciman, and Quentin Skinner (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1972), pp. 174–93. While not adopting entirely MacCallum's critique, my analysis is strongly informed by it, and by Felix Oppenheim's *Political Concepts: A Reconstruction* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981).

the term 'liberty' when they are describing relationships between members of human societies and relationships between those members and their governments; the ways in which they understand the preconditions for the existence of liberty in any political society; the ways in which they assess its value; and the ways in which they determine the extent of it that ought to be enjoyed by members of political societies.

* * *

In presenting his account of human nature and human flourishing in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics*, Aristotle nowhere claims that we are *free* only if we perform those virtuous actions that fulfill our nature. He nowhere, that is, argues for the central proposition of what Skinner and others refer to as the 'positive theory of liberty' which he is supposed to espouse. As we have seen, Aristotle rather emphasizes that we are *happy* and come to perfect ourselves if and only if we perform such actions.

That Aristotle sometimes uses the term 'freedom' to mean the absence of constraints imposed by rulers, laws, and constitutions on other citizens from performing particular actions is evident in the *Politics* when he objects to those who say that liberty consists in doing as one likes. In the best of democracies, he claims, 'every man should be responsible to others, nor should any one be allowed to do just as he pleases; for where absolute freedom is allowed there is nothing to restrain the evil which is inherent in every man' (*P* 1318b38–1319a1). Aristotle here indicates that by 'freedom' he sometimes means something citizens have to the extent that they are not restrained by others from doing what they feel like doing. By 'absolute freedom', he means the absence of all restraints, including those imposed by law, constitutions, and rulers, on the activities of the citizens. Aristotle thus does not here object to the conceptualization of political freedom as the absence of restraints placed by rulers and laws on citizens from doing certain things; rather, he objects to the view that members of political societies should enjoy absolute freedom, where that would mean the absence of all restraints on them from doing whatever it is they want to do. As Fred Miller observes, understanding what Aristotle says on the issue of political freedom in terms of the absence of restraints imposed by rulers, laws, and citizens upon other citizens from doing certain things is entirely in accordance with ancient Greek usage of the two terms *eleutheria* and *exousia*, which are commonly translated as 'liberty' or 'freedom'.¹²

¹² Miller, *Nature, Justice, and Rights in Aristotle's 'Politics'*, pp. 102–03. See also Mogens Herman Hansen, 'Liberty: Athenian vs. Modern Views', in *Demokratia* ed. by Josiah Ober and Charles Hedrick (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 91–104.

However, when he is discussing the relations between humans, Aristotle also uses the term 'freedom' to refer to a state that is different from that of the slave. 'To the ancient Greek,' Miller observes, 'a free man (*eleutheros*) or free woman (*eleuthera*) was fundamentally contrasted with a slave who belongs wholly to another person.'¹³ Aristotle uses the terms 'freeman' and 'slave' to refer to those who are *by nature* free and enslaved in relation to another human, or those who are *by law* free and enslaved in relation to another. He defines the slave as a 'possession', one which is an 'instrument of action separable from the possessor' (*P* 1254a8–18). He thus sometimes speaks of the freedom of some humans to perform particular actions with respect to others essentially in terms of not being the property of another man. In addition, he commonly speaks of the freeman as one who does not have or is not subject to 'the rule of a master' (*P* 1254b19). Peter Garnsey observes that, in light of the analogies Aristotle draws between masters/slaves on the one hand, and men/animals, husbands/wives, adults/children, soul/body, intellect/passions, rulers/subjects, on the other, it is difficult to determine precisely the nature of the rule to which the slave is subject, and to which the freeman is not.¹⁴ It need not be a despotical rule, for example, since Aristotle understands this kind of rule to be rule in the interest of the ruler only and therefore unnatural, whereas he sees the rule of the man who is the natural master of another as rule which is in the interests of both parties. Indeed, he claims in Book I, speaking of natural slavery, that 'master and slave have the same interest' (*P* 1252b1). Later in Book III, however, he qualifies these claims: 'the rule of a master, although the slave by nature and the master by nature have in reality the same interests, is nevertheless exercised primarily with a view to the interest of the master, but accidentally considers the slave, since, if the slave perish, the rule of the master perishes with him' (*P* 1278b30–37). On this account, a person's being free with respect to another person is a matter of not being the property of that person, and not being subject to the rule of one who rules mainly but not exclusively for his own sake.

Since, for Aristotle, the standing of particular humans in relation to each other as freemen and slaves in some cases depends merely on the natural distribution of rational principle in them, then at least one particular kind of freedom which humans may have with respect to each other does *not* depend upon civil laws,

¹³ Miller, *Nature, Justice, and Rights in Aristotle's 'Politics'*, p. 102. See also Richard Mulgan, 'Liberty in Ancient Greece', in *Conceptions of Liberty in Political Philosophy*, ed. by Zbigniew Pelczynski and John Gray (London: Athlone Press, 1984), pp. 7–27.

¹⁴ Peter Garnsey, *Ideas of Slavery From Aristotle to Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 107–27.

constitutions, and the rights they define and protect. But insofar as the freeman and slave are defined by civil law, then civil law and a means of enforcing it are preconditions for freedom. As Jonathan Barnes points out, Aristotle's objections to the proponents of democracy make clear that 'it is possible for there to be rule over free men [...]. Indeed, that is the definition of "political rule", and a State is by definition a fellowship of the free'.¹⁵ Aristotle thus holds that in order to be freemen, men must live under some kind of political rule, some kind of constitution. Since Aristotle regards monarchy, aristocracy, and polity or constitutional form as forms of political rule, he holds that it is possible for men to be free under all three of these constitutions. Aristotle thus does not hold that a non-monarchical constitution is necessary for citizens to be 'freemen'. Nor does he claim that in order to be what he calls 'free' and a 'free man' in political society, citizens must not be subject to constraints imposed by rulers or the constitution on the act of participating in government. For a monarchical constitution — one which grants the power to rule to a single person who is pre-eminent in virtue and who rules others in accordance with law with a view to their interest — prevents citizens from ruling and they 'should joyfully obey' the ruler (*P* 1284b32–33, 1288a30, 1325b8–13). The fact that they obey him and do not and cannot participate in ruling does not, in Aristotle's eyes, render them slaves or compromise their standing as 'freemen'.

Though one *need* not be free to participate in government in order to be a free man, Aristotle nevertheless regards participation in government along with contemplation as important and valuable activities, since both are exercises of virtue and therefore constitutive of the end of human existence. One cannot exercise intellectual and moral virtue without leisure, and 'many necessities of life have to be supplied before we can have leisure' (*P* 1334a18–19; see also 1290b40–1291a3, 1328b33–1329a2). Since, for Aristotle, only a class of labourers within their political societies can supply us with these necessities, it follows that such a class of labourers is also a precondition for the freedom to perform some important actions. Strictly speaking, this class of labourers is not a precondition for *civil* liberties, where civil liberties are freedoms of citizens from constraints imposed by rulers and other citizens on their performing particular acts. The class of slaves and labourers is required for a different *kind* of freedom that is required for the exercise of whatever *civil* freedoms citizens may have — the absence of those constraints imposed by basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter. In order for citizens to have

¹⁵ Jonathan Barnes, 'Aristotle and Political Liberty', in *Aristotle's 'Politik': Akten des XI Symposium Aristotelicum Friedrichshafen/Bodensee*, ed. by Günther Patzig (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht), pp. 250–64 (p. 253).

the civil liberty they need to be happy, at least the warrior class, if not all citizens, must also have specific moral virtues, for there is no leisure for those enslaved by others (*P* 1334a18–22; also 1291a6–10). Finally, any particular individual's freedom to live the life of virtue depends on the virtue of other citizens, for it is impossible to be a partner in friendship without other qualified partners.

Aristotle asserts that the freedom to exercise virtue is of great importance and value to both individuals and the societies of which they are citizens. This is because individuals can fulfill themselves and lead successful lives only if they exercise virtue, and the society at large can be successful only if its members do so. The precise nature of this freedom to live the virtuous life which is so important and valuable, however, will not be the same in all states, but will depend upon their constitutions, for 'the virtue of the citizen must [...] be relative to the constitution of which he is a member' (*P* 1276b30–31). Since, in the 'best state', as Aristotle defines it at one point in Book III, the citizen is 'one who is able and willing to be governed and to govern with a view to the life of virtue' (*P* 1284a1–2), participating in ruling is part of the life of virtue and the freedom to do so is thus important and something the state will provide and protect. However, as we have seen, under a true monarch, citizens do not properly claim ruling as part of their virtuous activity as citizens (*P* 1284b32–33, 1288a30, 1325b8–13). Thus, the value and importance that the absence of constraints imposed by rulers and other citizens upon particular actions will have for citizens will vary in accordance with the forms of government that are in place. But since politics is a central arena for the exercise of moral virtue, and since the exercise of moral virtue is a, if not the, principal end of human existence, Aristotle suggests that the freedom to enter and participate in that arena will in most political societies be of great value to individuals who wish to achieve the end of human existence. In addition, the importance and value the freedom to live the life of virtue may have for individuals is contingent upon their natural standing and their profession: since natural slaves, labourers, farmers, mechanics, traders, and craftsmen are incapable of living the life of virtue, the freedom to live that life is of little value to them.

Aristotle's *ideal* of liberty, then, his notion of the kind and extent of freedom he thinks citizens of a state *should* have, is grounded in his understanding of the achievement of happiness as the *raison d'être* of the political society. The kind of happiness that is appropriate to and attainable by any particular person in any given political society depends upon several things: the kind of constitution under which he lives; the quality of his own virtue and his capacity for happiness, for 'happiness is the highest good, being a realization and perfect practice of virtue, which some can attain, while others have little or none of it' (*P* 1328a37–39); how

whatever virtue he does have is related to the virtue of all other citizens of his state; how he spends his time, and whether or not he does or needs to perform necessary services. The kind and extent of liberty Aristotle feels any particular individual should enjoy within political societies will also depend upon these things. At least in some cases, if one is incapable of a particular kind of happiness, one does not rightly enjoy the freedom to achieve that happiness and one may rightly be denied the opportunity by the rulers to do those things that constitute that happiness. One may, that is, rightly be denied the freedoms to participate in ruling and to own property (*P* 1329a17–22). One may even be rightly coerced by citizens and the state to perform those services which allow those who *are* capable of that happiness to attain it (*P* 1330a25–33). Besides limiting the freedom of citizens in light of these considerations, the political society is also entitled to limit it in order ‘to restrain the evil which is inherent in every man’ (*P* 1319a1). The rulers of a political society may always rightly restrict by law backed by the credible threat of punishment those actions which are detrimental to the citizens’ achievement of that happiness of which they are capable.

Aristotle’s views on the kind and extent of civil freedoms the citizens should enjoy in any particular political society are also a function of his view that the proper role of the political society is not just to serve as an environment within which people may pursue without impediment the virtuous life that is suitable to them, but also actively to produce and cultivate the virtues required to pursue such a life in the first place. Since rulers are entitled to legislate with the aim of making men good, and since passing and enforcing laws that assign significant penalties to particular actions restrict the freedom to perform those actions, Aristotle clearly sanctions the curtailment of a wide range of citizens’ liberties in the name of making them good and thereby qualifying them for the life of virtue in which happiness consists. In laying out the conditions of his ideal state in the final books of the *Politics*, Aristotle clearly endorses strict government regulation of private property, education, child rearing, marriage, copulation, and the arts. This has inclined some commentators to speak of Aristotle’s ‘penchant for totalitarianism’.¹⁶ In this regard, it should also be noted that given Aristotle’s view that legislators ‘ought to implant things in the minds of citizens’ (*P* 1333b36–38) and ought to make them good by forming habits in them, it is not at all clear that citizens have the freedom to form their own moral characters as Aristotle says they do in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. If this is true, then the citizens of Aristotle’s states are not fully free in the eyes of theorists of civil liberty such as William Connolly for whom civil liberties

¹⁶ Barnes, ‘Aristotle and Political Liberty’, p. 263.

include the absence of ‘constraints on the character of the agent himself, impeding his ability to conceive and to choose reflectively among alternatives’.¹⁷ But because Aristotle sees the freedoms to act and to feel in ways that are contrary to virtue as freedoms to do things which are irrational and detrimental to the happiness of oneself and one’s state, and because he sees that happiness as that for the sake of which all properly continue to exist in a state, he does not see the curtailment of these freedoms as a bad thing. Neither, presumably, would the citizens, not at least those who share their state’s views on happiness and how to achieve it.

All of these observations make clear that, for Aristotle, the question of under what conditions citizens *maximize* their civil liberty, where civil liberty is defined in terms of the absence of state-imposed restrictions on the pursuit of their own ends, is not very pressing. Indeed, he shows considerable hostility towards those who grant a priority to maximizing civil liberty and who prefer forms of government, such as democracy, simply on grounds that under this form of government they have more freedom from rulers to do what they wish than they do under the other forms. This hostility is grounded in Aristotle’s view that the aim of an authentic political society is neither to enable citizens to pursue whatever ends they may happen to have, nor to pursue the moral or religious life as they see fit, but to enable them to pursue and achieve the ends of man: happiness, which is the exercise of virtue. This is why the fact that democracy is the form of government under which citizens would enjoy the greatest freedom from government and other citizens to do what they want — and Aristotle seems inclined to grant this — does not pull much weight with him. From an Aristotelian perspective, a much more pressing question is that of under what conditions citizens have the freedom from rulers and other citizens that is required for them to achieve the happiness that, given the constitution of their society and their own potential for virtue, is appropriate for them.

* * *

Cicero often describes members of political societies as being free when they hold a limited number of rights defined by civil law. As Wirszubski puts it speaking of Ciceronian and Roman usage at large during the late republic, ‘*libertas* at Rome and with regard to Romans is not an innate faculty or right of man, but the sum of civic rights granted by the laws of Rome’.¹⁸ Commenting on Cicero’s definition of

¹⁷ William Connolly, *The Terms of Political Discourse* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1974; repr. 1993), p. 157.

¹⁸ Ch. Wirszubski, *Libertas as a Political Idea at Rome During the Late Republic and Early Principate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950; repr. 1968), p. 7. See also Crawford, *Roman Republic*, p. 1.

the republic (*res publica*) as the property of the people (*res populi*) in *On the Republic*, Malcolm Schofield observes that among these rights was the right to have some say in the disposal of property owned by the people at large:

the notion that the *populus* should own its own *res* is not itself the point. What Cicero has in view is an idea about rights which the metaphor [of ownership] enables him to express. If the *populus* possesses its own *res*, then it follows that it has rights over its management and use. And the ability to exercise those rights is what political liberty consists in.¹⁹

But the rights to manage and use the property of the public (which includes not just lands but also laws, offices, the armed forces, and honours) are only some of the rights Cicero has in mind when he is discussing civil liberty. His discussion of *private* property in *On Duties* and the *Philippics* shows that he also thinks of the right of citizens to claim sole ownership in some things as being an important element of civil liberty, for he sees that right as being essential to the existence of a political society, and at times he writes as though it is in fact one of its principal *raison d'être*. In *On Laws*, Cicero's strongly stated commitment to the rights the Roman populace traditionally enjoyed also implies that *libertas* for him also properly includes the right of intermarriage (*conubium*), the right of concluding legal contracts (*commercium*), and the right of changing domiciles (*migratio*). And his discussion of the tribunate indicates that he affirms the old right of any citizen to appeal any magistrate's sentence of flogging or death to the people as embodied in the popular assembly: the *ius provocationis* (*provocatio* for short) which in *On the Orator* he refers to as 'that famous buttress of the State and defence of freedom' (II. 48.199). He also includes the *ius auxilii*, the right of the tribunes to protect citizens from being coerced by magistrates, in his code of laws (*Laws* III. 6).

This account of civil liberty in terms of rights defined and protected by civil law is consistent with Pettit's claim that the Romans conceived of liberty in terms of non-domination. For having civil rights to private and public property and rights of appeal meant that the magistrates could not interfere at will and with impunity with the lives of the citizens — the law stipulated that were they to interfere in a way that violated their rights, they would be subject to specific penalties. It is also consistent with the contrast between slaves and freemen which is common in Cicero's writing, for one of the defining features of the slave in Rome was that he had no civil rights.

But Cicero's explicit treatment of civil liberty in his philosophical works is unsystematic, and, as Brunt has shown in his comprehensive discussion of the issue,

¹⁹ Malcolm Schofield, 'Cicero's Definition of *Res Publica*', in *Saving the City* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 178–94 (p. 188). See also Brunt 'Libertas in the Republic', pp. 299, 317–19.

he like other Roman authors uses the term *libertas* to mean many different things.²⁰ It is thus important to recognize several complicating factors. First, the slave/freeman contrast notwithstanding, the conception of civil freedom in terms of civil rights implies that freedom and slavery are not all or nothing conditions, but that one may be more or less free, and more or less enslaved — it all depends on *how many* and *which particular* rights one has. This is clearly indicated when, in Book II of *On the Republic*, Cicero observes not, as he elsewhere does, that the people were enslaved under the kings and free under the republic, but that ‘our kings already grasped the point that certain rights should be granted to the people’ (II. 31). As the people acquired more rights under the kings, so, Cicero implies, they became more free. As Brunt insists, this is an essential feature of the idea of freedom reflected by both Ciceronian and Roman usage at large.²¹ Secondly, this conception of freedom in terms of rights defined by civil law cannot be what Cicero has in mind when he is discussing the freedom of entire political societies from each other, for those societies were not subject to a civil law in the way citizens of one political society were. In these discussions, he means rights and powers defined by, as Brunt puts it, ‘treaty obligations and power relationships’, and in Ciceronian thought and Roman practice neither was this kind of freedom an all or nothing thing.²² Most importantly, Cicero sometimes implies that even when one has no civil rights, or even when those civil rights are revoked, it is not necessarily the case that one forfeits all civil liberty. For he does not claim that the Romans were enslaved whenever they appointed a dictator, even though those who held this office (which existed from the earliest days of the republic up until the end of the Second Punic War) were granted extensive discretionary and prerogative powers, and even though the people forfeited some of their most fundamental civil rights, including *provocatio*, when those offices were occupied. Neither does he hold that the citizens were enslaved when, by the *senatus consultum ultimum*, the senate conferred powers, comparable to those of the old dictators, upon the consuls, powers which he himself held and exercised when, as consul, he had to deal with Catiline’s conspiracy in 63. The crucial thing for Cicero is how the men who held such offices in fact behaved: as long as the dictator or consuls with special powers acted justly, the fact that they were legally entitled to interfere in all kinds of ways with the citizens did not, in Cicero’s eyes, mean that the citizens were deprived of all civil liberty.

²⁰ Brunt, ‘*Libertas* in the Republic’, pp. 281–350.

²¹ Brunt makes this point throughout his essay.

²² See Brunt, ‘*Libertas* in the Republic’, p. 93, and Crawford’s narrative of Rome’s conquest of Italy, in *Roman Republic*, pp. 31–42.

It follows that Cicero does not always operate on a concept of liberty as non-domination; in some cases, he is operating on a concept of freedom as non-interference, the absence of actual forms of constraint, or to be more precise, the absence of actual forms of unjust constraint. This is confirmed in other passages, such as that in Book I of *On the Republic* when Scipio approvingly cites Plato's *Republic* where Socrates describes the state in which 'total freedom' prevails (I. 65–67). In the passage Scipio cites, 'total freedom' is defined not in terms of the absence of a master, or an infinite number of civil rights, but in terms of the absence of all constraints placed on citizens' actions by law and 'authorities' such as fathers, masters, citizens, teachers, and senators. Claiming civil rights that do not properly belong to them, while at the same time ignoring all restraints placed upon them by civil law and authority, the people begin to do whatever they like 'and the final outcome is anarchy'. Reverting to 'his own conversational style', Scipio reaffirms Plato's view that such 'excessive freedom topples over into excessive slavery. Extreme freedom produces a tyrant, along with the extremely harsh and evil slavery that goes with him' (*Rep* I. 67–68).

Because Cicero thinks of civil liberty in different ways, he also thinks about the conditions under which it exists in different ways. Insofar as he thinks of civil freedom as the absence of a master, and insofar as he thinks of monarchs as masters, he holds that a precondition for civil liberty is some kind of non-monarchical constitution. Thus, in *On the Republic*, he has Scipio observe that 'a community that lives under a king is totally deprived of many advantages, in particular, freedom, which is not a matter of having a just master, but of having none at all' (II. 43; see also *Phil* VIII. 4.12). But we have seen that Cicero does not always think of kings or those agents who wield 'regal power' as masters. And there is no reason why he must: there is nothing incoherent about a political society in which a king, subject to the civil law of that society, is bound to recognize and respect the rights that that law grants to the people. Indeed, Cicero at times, like Aristotle, *defines* the king as one who respects legal ties and the tyrant as one who does not (*Rep* II. 47–48). When, moreover, he describes the early republican period during which the people were 'free', he observes that the people were subject to the same 'regal power' to which they were subject under the monarchy — it is just that two rather than one person wielded it. Thus on the understanding of civil freedom in terms of rights defined by civil law, an understanding which is consistent with the concept of non-domination, it is not the case that Cicero consistently holds that a non-monarchical constitution is necessary in order for civil liberty to exist.

In relation to the understanding of civil freedom in terms of the possession and exercise of rights, civil law is a precondition for the existence of civil liberty, for

those rights exist by virtue of the civil law that governs the political society to which those citizens belong. In Book II of *On the Republic*, Cicero seems to feel that the kind of mixed constitution which Rome came to have by the middle of the fifth century (after the Decemvirate of 451–449) is necessary in order for a society governed by law to endure. But Scipio's endorsement of Plato implies that Cicero also thinks of citizens as enjoying liberty only when various agents within their political society have 'authority' and when various segments of the citizenry have the proper *attitude* towards it: they must 'respect' and 'obey' it. Though, as we have seen, Cicero and his major characters sometimes identify civil law as a means of making people virtuous, they also on many occasions suggest that citizens must, *in the first place*, be virtuous in order for law to have any force and beneficial effect upon the society at large: anarchy, as Cicero envisions it, is not so much a condition of lawlessness as a condition in which, though law may exist, no-one *respects* it, and no-one therefore is concerned to *obey* it. In his ethical and political writings, Cicero thus commonly identifies virtue as a precondition for the kind of community without which there is no true civil liberty (*Rep* V. 1–2). Finally, over the course of the *Philippics*, it becomes clear that even though Roman citizens had rights defined by Roman law, they would still not be free if the city fell to Antony who, as Sulla and Caesar had done before him, was leading his legions against it — were that to happen, the Romans would be slaves. In order to defend and preserve their civil liberty in situations of this kind, a political society required an effective military, such as Octavian's army, and the Martian and fourth legions, which had effectively opposed Antony and thereby saved Roman liberty.

In presenting his account of human nature, Cicero does not claim that a person is free only if he actually engages in those practices which his own nature inclines and the law of nature commands him to perform. Cicero rather emphasizes that, given what humans and natural law are, a person can be fulfilled and happy only if he engages in those practices. In addition, he claims that it is only by way of doing particular things that one can achieve true glory, that 'mortal immortality' which sometimes appears to be the real end of human life in Cicero's writing. Cicero also occasionally observes that one achieves the reward of bliss in the afterlife by way of doing these things. For Cicero, these things include holding public office and carrying out its duties, as he claims to have done himself; speaking in the popular assemblies, the senate, and the courts with the aim of serving justice, as he claims to have done himself; commanding armed forces in the service of the republic, as he felt Octavian did in opposing Antony in the mid-40s; fighting well in the armed forces for the sake of the political society, as he felt the men in the fourth and Martian legions did when they successfully fought against Antony's men. But they may also include

actively resisting government, as Lucius Junius Brutus did in order to establish the republic in 509, and even conspiring against and assassinating government and military officials, as Marcus Brutus and Cassius did in 44. And while simply respecting authority, obeying civil law, and just being a low-profile but honourable citizen might not bring one glory, it may well, in Cicero's view, constitute that 'happy and honorable life' of which he sometimes speaks as the fulfilment of human life.

The freedom to engage in these activities (where that freedom is defined in terms of civil rights against both government and other citizens) is of great value to the individual, then, because it is a precondition for that individual's achieving the ends and purposes of human life. But this freedom is also of great value to the political society to which the individual belongs, for it is a precondition for the individual's acting in a way that enhances the welfare of that society at large and all of its citizens. That is to say that the civil liberty of each citizen is valuable not just to that citizen, but to all other citizens, since it is the precondition for each citizen's acting in a way that benefits and, indeed, makes possible the partnership in which all citizens participate.

These observations make clear that Cicero does not participate in a tradition of political thought which presents a coherent view 'about the way in which it is most rational for us to act in order to maximize our negative liberty'.²³ Like Aristotle, Cicero shows very little concern with maximizing the liberties of the citizens of a republic, as if that in and of itself were a good thing, or as if that were valuable simply because it is a precondition for the citizens' achieving the various ends they happen to have chosen to pursue. Indeed, that Scipio clearly prefers monarchy to the other pure forms of government, and that democracy, which is the form of government that 'attract[s] us [...] by freedom' (*Rep* I. 54–55), comes in a distant fourth (behind the mixed constitution, monarchy, and aristocracy) in the final ranking clearly indicates how far maximizing civil freedom is from Cicero's priorities. He affirms civil liberty in these works only insofar as it contributes to the stability of the kind of aristocratic political society which he favours, the kind of society he felt Rome actually was from the Decemvirate down to the Gracchi.

Cicero's understanding of 'true liberty', the freedom the populace of a political society *ought* to enjoy, thus includes the rights we have mentioned above, including rights to participate in government. Cicero affirms these latter rights in *On the Republic* where he objects to aristocracy on grounds that the populace is 'deprived of any participation in discussion and decision-making' (I. 43), and says that, under the ideal mixed constitution, such as that which Rome eventually came to have,

²³ Skinner, 'Republican Ideal of Political Liberty', p. 307.

‘certain affairs should be reserved for the judgment and desires of the masses’ (I. 69). In *On Laws* he writes that ‘when the people’s appointment of magistrates, judicial verdicts, and legislative decisions, positive and negative, have been made by vote, the details shall be disclosed to the aristocracy and shall reflect the free choice of the people’ (III. 10). He also grants several rights to the tribunes, including the right to veto, an important means through which the populace could influence legislation (*Laws* III. 23–24). But his understanding of ‘true liberty’ (which he sometimes refers to simply as ‘liberty’) is also restricted in many important ways. His often virulent critique of the Gracchi makes clear that he does not support the populace’s claims to public lands (*ager publicus*) that accumulated as a result of Roman imperialism and that were bought up or simply seized by the patricians in a particularly aggressive manner from the end of the Second Punic War onwards. And his remarks in *On the Republic* and *On Laws* on the tribunate and the secret ballot make clear that, under ideal republican constitutional and legal conditions, the right of the populace to participate in government is relatively small — it is the consuls and the senate who wield most of the political and legislative power in the kind of political society Cicero endorses. Indeed, as we saw in our discussion of forms of government, Cicero on occasion speaks as though he wishes to grant to the populace only so much freedom to participate in government as will make them respect and obey the authority of leading men. It is also important to note that all citizens forfeit *provocatio* when they are under a dictator, and when they are in the field under a military officer (*Laws* III. 6).

Because, like Polybius, Cicero sees a state religion as a crucial element in the formation of virtue and the maintenance of that kind of political society within which humans achieve their ends, and because he feels magistrates have a duty to legislate with the aim of creating and sustaining such a society, he celebrates Numa (the second king of Rome who instituted the state religion) and endorses legislation that severely restricts the religious freedom of the populace as well. Thus, in Book II of *On Laws*, Cicero recommends legislation that compels all citizens to follow a state religion, the deities of which include human beings and human virtues. This state religion is to be supervised by a three-tiered priesthood — to which in *Areopagitica* Milton refers as ‘the Pontific College with their augers and flamens’²⁴ — that is to exercise extensive powers in both private and public political life (*Laws* II. 18–22, 30–31). Indeed, ‘the greatest and most prestigious power in the state is that of the augurs [one of the three kinds of priest] combined, as it is, with political authority’, for nothing can legitimately be done by any official at home or in the

²⁴ *Areopagitica*, p. 722.

field without the permission of these priests (*Laws* II. 31, III. 11). In addition, it would seem, from what remains of the discussion of education in Book IV of *On the Republic*, that Cicero also favours legislation that assigns penalties to playwrights and poets whose works bring 'infamy or disgrace to another'. 'Our lifestyle', he explains, 'should be open to the magistrates' verdicts and the judgments of the law, not to the cleverness of poets; nor should we have to listen to insults unless we are entitled to reply and to defend ourselves in court' (*Rep* IV. 11–12). And in *On Laws*, Cicero expresses his support for the stringent controls Plato wished to impose upon musicians, ordaining that 'the theatre should be alive with song, accompanied by strings and pipes, provided such performances are kept within due bounds as the law requires' (II. 38). Subject to magistrates, the law, and a wide range of 'authorities', the civil liberty of the Roman populace is highly restricted in Cicero's ideal republic.

That Cicero favours a form of political society within which the civil liberties of the populace are restricted to a great extent does not mean he grants a *carte blanche* to the patricians. Because, as we have seen, he feels that the behaviour of the nobles who rightly exercise the right to legislate and govern constitutes a powerful example for the entire populace, Cicero also recommends that their behaviour be strictly regulated by laws and censors as well. Thus, in *On Laws*, he claims that the censors 'shall not allow men to remain bachelors; they shall regulate the behaviour of the citizens and not permit a disreputable person to remain in the Senate' (III. 7). And 'on leaving office, men shall give a report of their acts to the censors; by doing, so, however, they shall not be any the less liable to prosecution' (*Laws* III. 11; also III. 9).

* * *

The mature Milton's favorite ancient historian sometimes works on an idea of liberty as simple non-interference. In his account of the early history of Rome in the preface to *The War with Catiline*, for example, he writes,

the city of Rome [...] was at the outset founded and inhabited by Trojans, who were wandering about in exile under the leadership of Aeneas and had no fixed abode; they were joined by the Aborigines, a rustic folk, without laws or government, free and unrestrained. (*Cat* 6.1–2)

Sallust here is not using the word 'free' to describe someone who has fulfilled those ends he feels humans have by nature. Neither can he be using the word 'free' to describe people who enjoy a condition or status defined by law which is the antithesis of the legally defined condition of being in the power of another, for he uses it to describe people who are under neither government nor civil law. The primary meaning of 'free' here is simply non-interference, not subject to any form of

constraint, where civil law and government are conceived not as things by virtue of which people are free subjects or slaves, but as things that constrain people. In addition, though he does not refer to it as 'the state of nature', Sallust here seems to postulate a human condition prior to the institution of law and government in which men are free in this sense.

Things are different in one of the most explicit treatments of civil liberty in Sallust's work — the speech he attributes to the tribune Gaius Memmius in *The War with Jugurtha*. Sallust describes Memmius delivering this speech to the people of Rome in 111 BC with the intention of inciting them to avenge themselves upon the corrupt nobles by demanding legal prosecution of the senators whom Jugurtha had bribed. Such a legal prosecution, rather than violence, Memmius urged, was the best way for the people 'not to prove false to their country and their own liberties' (*Jug* 30.3). Memmius feels that the people are not at the time being true to their liberties since he claims that they are in fact agreeing to live in a state of 'submission' (*Jug* 31.26) and 'slavery' (*servitus*) (*Jug* 30.11, 31.22). This is so, Memmius, explains, because they are acquiescing in the fact that the nobles are denying the people their 'legal rights' (*Jug* 31.8, 31.17). He further observes that the Gracchi, falsely accused of aspiring to royal power, were in fact simply trying to remove the people from this state of servitude by restoring 'their rights to the commons' (*Jug* 31.8). Memmius does not identify the other particular legal rights which are in fact being denied by the nobles, but he appears to be thinking of rights of distributing and using things which, according to him, the people jointly own, such as law, public property and funds, national sovereignty, public honours, public offices, and even themselves, as soldiers. For he describes the ongoing state of slavery as one resulting from a small group of nobles having pillaged the treasury and 'possessed supreme glory and vast wealth', and one in which 'the laws, your sovereignty, and all things human and divine have been delivered to your enemies' (*Jug* 31.9–10). That the state of servitude is one in which citizens are actually prevented from exercising their legal rights over what they jointly own is made more clear when Memmius laments 'the days when kingdoms, provinces, statutes, laws, courts, war and peace, in short all things human and divine, were in the hands of a few; and when you, that is to say the Roman people unconquered by your enemies, rulers of all nations, were content to retain the mere breath of life' (*Jug* 31.20). At the end of the speech, Memmius reaffirms the view that the republic is essentially the property of the people which the people have a right to control, when he laments that 'your country has been offered for sale at home and abroad' (*Jug* 31.25–26), a sentiment that Jugurtha contemptuously confirms (*Jug* 35.10). To regain their 'freedom' and 'liberty', the people would thus need to regain and

exercise their 'legal rights' (including the right to participate in ruling and the right of control over public things) which they have by law.²⁵

Sallust himself understands civil freedom in terms of traditional and legal rights in jointly owned things in his digression on the causes of 'the parties and factions' (*Jug* 41.1) that were destroying the republic at the time of the Jugurthine war. In this digression, Sallust makes his famous observation that, after it annihilated Carthage in 146 BC, Rome was delivered from its fear of an enemy (*metus hostilis*) and therefore became corrupt:²⁶ 'the nobles began to abuse their position and the people their liberty, and every man for himself robbed, pillaged, and plundered' (*Jug* 41.5). But because the nobles 'had the more powerful organization', it came to establish an 'unjust power' which consisted in its having in its hands

the treasury, the provinces, public offices, glory and triumphs. The people were burdened with military service and poverty. The generals divided the spoils of war with a few friends. Meanwhile the parents or little children of the soldiers, if they had a powerful neighbour, were driven from their homes. (*Jug* 41.7–9)

It is in response to this state of affairs that Sallust, like Memmius, understands the Gracchi vainly to have attempted, mainly by way of their proposed agrarian reforms, 'to assert the freedom of the commons and expose the crimes of the oligarchs, the nobility, who were guilty' (*Jug* 42.1). This account of slavery and liberty may also be found in the earlier monograph, *The War with Catiline*, though it is notable that Sallust here puts it into the mouth of Catiline when he is attempting to gain popular support for his revolution (20.1–9). As Earl observes, Sallust was acutely aware of how the noble idea which he called *libertas* and which he shared with Memmius and the plebeian consul Marius could be used and indeed perverted by any individual or group for their own gain.²⁷

These passages also indicate that, in addition to rights in managing the *res publica*, the civil rights which constitute the plebeians' liberty include rights of protection against various kinds of interference in their lives by civil magistrates. When, for example, Memmius refers to those 'legal rights' which the ancestors passed down to him, one of the rights he means is 'the freedom of speech which is my inheritance from my father' (*Jug* 31.5). He must also have in mind the old

²⁵ See also the speeches of Lepidus and the tribune Macer in *Histories* (13–14, 7–8, 20).

²⁶ On the importance of this observation, see Neal Wood, 'Sallust's Theorum: A Comment on "Fear" in Western Political Thought', *History of Political Thought*, 16 (1995), 174–89.

²⁷ Earl, *Political Thought of Sallust*, p. 94. For the similarity between Sallust and Memmius and Marius, see pp. 68, 118.

provocatio, and *appellatio*, a citizen's civil right to appeal to a tribune for help in cases where he thought he was wronged by an order of a magistrate.²⁸ In addition, both Memmius and Sallust appear to have in mind basic personal liberties, such as the right to own and enjoy one's private property, when they object to the 'slavery' endured by the plebeians in the late republic. The civil rights in which civil freedom consists, then, include rights of use and management of what citizens own in common, and rights to particular activities, such as speaking, enjoying private property, and appealing decisions of magistrates.

It is thus not the case, as Skinner claims, that Sallust and the ancient Romans never discuss freedom in terms of 'the unconstrained enjoyment of a number of specific civil rights'.²⁹ This way of discussing the freedom of the plebeians is in fact dominant in both Cicero and Sallust. In addition, to say simply that all of these passages show that Sallust and his Romans always understand civil liberty as what citizens have when they are not subject to an agent that, even if it was not in fact doing so, *could* if it so wished interfere with them with impunity is surely to overlook some important details. As we have observed, the understanding of civil freedom in terms of a legal status according to which a citizen possesses particular rights defined and protected by law is consistent with the concept of non-domination. But if Pettit and Skinner are right, Memmius and others would have felt the citizens were deprived of all civil liberty — they would still have claimed that they were 'enslaved' — had they been subject to such an authority that was not in fact interfering with them in any way, that was not *in fact* violating and denying their civil rights with impunity. For according to Skinner and Pettit, the essential aspect of the condition of slavery is not the interference one in fact suffers, but the state of being subject to various forms of interference and having no recourse in case one in fact experiences them. These passages do not support this implication of their view, since at the heart of the discontent and the cry for liberty is not what the oligarchs *could* do with impunity, but what they *had in fact done* and *were in fact doing* with impunity. And it is obviously not the case that Memmius and the others would have complained so bitterly about their 'enslavement' had they not *actually* suffered, but merely felt they *might* suffer and not be able to do anything about it. While they may as Pettit puts it, have 'worried about domination',³⁰ the Roman plebeians were primarily concerned with *actual* interference and the suffering it caused. At least for the plebeians, *libertas* meant first and foremost not being

²⁸ See also *Liv* III. 54–56, X. 9.

²⁹ Skinner, *Liberty Before Liberalism*, p. 18.

³⁰ Pettit, *Republicanism*, p. 341.

interfered with by the magistrates and wealthy nobles in the ways in which they were actually interfering with them, and only secondly not being subject to agents who were entitled by law to interfere with them as they wished.

This point is borne out by Livy's narrative of the early history of Rome in *From the Founding of the City*. Immediately following the passage at the opening of Book II where he describes the advent of liberty under the consuls, Livy adds a crucial clarification: 'you may reckon the beginning of liberty as proceeding rather from the limitation of the consuls' authority to a year than from any diminution of their power compared with that which the kings had exercised' (*Liv* II. 1.7). Ascribing the power of kings to the consuls, Livy makes clear that the advent of civil liberty in Rome was not the result of any reduction in the power to which the citizens of Rome were subject. It was rather the result of changes in how that power was delegated, the number of people who held it, their nature, and the tenure of their holding it: those who held that power (Lucius Junius Brutus and Lucius Tarquinius Collatinus) were not arrogant and did not exercise it in the unjust way in which the last arrogant king did; that power was no longer held by a single person at his pleasure but by two people; it was granted to those two people by way of an election; and it was granted to them for only one year at a time. Civil freedom is thus here not understood as not being subject to the kind of power held by the Roman kings. Having become 'free' in 509, the citizens of Rome were still, according to Livy at this point in the narrative, subject to regal power and were still therefore vulnerable, at least over the short term, to being restrained and compelled in any way the holders of that power wished to restrain and compel them. That is to say that the fact that there was greater obedience to the commands of law than to those of men did not mean that men were no longer dominated as they were under the kings. This is because the law itself granted regal power to the consuls.

Livy's explicit assertion that the abolition of the monarchy did not amount to the abolition of the power to which the people had been subject under the kings — even after the establishment of the tribunate — is confirmed by both consuls and tribunes over the course of the first decade of the history. The tribune Gaius Terentilius Harsa, for example, complains in 462 BC that the authority of the consuls was 'a thing excessive and intolerable in a free state. For it was only in name, he said, that it was less hateful than that of a king; in reality it was almost crueler, since in place of one master they had now got two, who possessed an unregulated and unlimited power, and while free themselves and without restraint, brought to bear all the terrors of the law and all its punishments upon the plebs'. In order to put an end to the 'licence' of the consuls, Harsa proposed 'a law providing for the appointment of five men to write out the statutes pertaining to the consular power' (*Liv* III. 9.1–5).

Harsa perhaps exaggerates in order to argue his case; however, it is important to see that when, in 445, the tribune Gaius Canuleius proposed a bill that allowed inter-marriage between patricians and plebeians, and other tribunes proposed that ‘the people should elect consuls at its pleasure from patriciate or plebs’, the consuls openly conceded the point: ‘they called on Jupiter Optimus Maximus to forbid that a power regal in its majesty should sink so low’ (*Liv* IV. 1–2). This is one of the few points on which the tribune Canuleius agrees with these consuls: ‘the consuls succeeded to the place of the kings, and possess no jot nor tittle of right or dignity that belonged not to the kings before’ (*Liv* IV. 3.9). Given this fact, Canuleius has to question the story about the advent of liberty the Romans liked to tell themselves: ‘did the banishment of the kings bring you [consuls] dominion, or to all men equal liberty?’ (*Liv* IV. 5.1). Much later, in 354, objecting to consuls who wished to exclude the plebeians from that office, the people angrily think ‘it were better to put up with kings or decemvirs, or — if possible — a more stern type of government than theirs, rather than see the consuls both patricians and have no turns at obeying and commanding, while a part of the people thought themselves established forever in authority and the commons born for no other end than servitude’ (*Liv* VII. 18.6–8). The dictator Lucius Papirius later finds it convenient to make the same observation to justify his condemnation of his Master of Horse, Quintus Fabius, who had disobeyed him: ‘the dictator’s authority is paramount, and the consuls obey him, though they possess the might of kings’ (*Liv* VIII. 32.3).

Livy thus ascribes civil liberty to people who were still subject to the power that was held by the Roman kings, a power he describes as being *transferred* from the kings to the consuls in 509. Were Livy and the Romans working on a notion of liberty as non-domination, they thus could not reasonably hold that they were free under the consuls. It is only if they are working on a notion of liberty as the absence of actual restraints and constraints (unjustly imposed by an arrogant authority) that they can reasonably maintain that they were free under consuls who, if not entirely, then to a considerable extent dominated them. One of the main reasons Livy and the Romans could reasonably hold that they were free under the consuls, where being free is a matter of the absence of unjust interference, is that the consuls were not perceived to be arrogant and to interfere unjustly with the lives of the citizens. A second main reason Livy affirms that the people were free under the consuls is not that that power was less than the powers wielded by a king, but that that power could not legally be held by anyone for more than one year (without re-election).

The decisive importance of both the kind of constraint that magistrates *in fact* impose and the length of tenure of office to the liberty of the people is also evident in discussions of other offices elsewhere in *From the Founding of the City*. For

example, dictators appointed by consuls could command at will all magistrates including the consuls and could pass judgements against which there was no appeal. That is to say that some of what were seen as the essential safeguards of liberty were abolished while the office of dictator was occupied. But neither Livy nor the Romans he describes appear to have thought of themselves as being enslaved while that office was occupied, as it frequently was. One reason they felt that dictators did not seriously threaten civil liberty was that they rarely in fact interfered unjustly with the lives of the citizens. A second reason was clearly that the tenure of his office was in principle limited to the duration required for him to perform the particular task that was set for him. Similarly, in describing the establishment of the Decemvirate in 451, Livy does not say that the Roman people were deprived of their liberty, nor does he describe the people as believing this, even though there was no appeal against the decisions of the ten appointed men, there were to be no other magistrates during their tenure, they had full legislative power, and the power they held was the regal power that had been transferred to the consuls upon the establishment of the republic: 'in the three hundred and second year from the founding of Rome the form of the polity was changed again, with the transfer of supreme authority from consuls to decemvirs, even as before it had passed from kings to consuls' (*Liv* III. 33.1–2). One of the main reasons the people did not feel their liberty was curtailed by men occupying this office with its extraordinary powers had to do with how they in fact initially behaved: because they did not during the first year in office interfere with the citizens in a way which was seen to be unjust, the citizens did not feel their liberty was limited or imperiled. Another main reason concerned the nature of the tenure of the office: 'sitting each one day in ten they administered justice to the people' (*Liv* III. 33.8); there was a one-year time limit on those who held the office (though they could and did stand for re-election); there was a limit placed on the existence of the office itself: the Decemvirate was to exist only until the laws had been set down. Once this task had been accomplished, there were to be consular elections. It was thus not by virtue of merely living under the decemvirs, but by virtue of living under decemvirs who became arrogant and in fact started behaving unjustly, and who held office beyond the appointed term, that the plebeians, to the delight of the senators, 'had fallen upon servitude' (*Liv* III. 37.2–3). As Livy exclaims, when the decemvirs failed to call elections and continued to wield their power and insignia of office, 'this was unmistakable tyranny. Men mourned for liberty as for ever lost' (*Liv* III. 38.1–2). And as Barbatus later puts it, the decemvirs were men who 'had left no law in the state; who had done away with elections, with annual magistracies, with the succession of new governors — the only means of equalizing liberty' (*Liv* III. 39.8). In

short, the Romans came to feel that their liberty was abridged under the decemvirs by virtue of the way the decemvirs in fact behaved.

According to both Sallust and Livy, then, the Romans were in many cases not so *sensitive* as to feel that they were ‘enslaved’ when they lived under a consul, dictator, decemvir, or senate that, though in principle having the authority to interfere with them in all kinds of ways, did not in fact do so. In many cases, the crucial issue for them, at least when it came to civil liberty, was what the magistrates were in fact doing, and not what they were entitled to or could with impunity do.

Insofar as they felt their civil liberty consisted in civil rights defined by law, Sallust’s Romans think of civil law as a precondition for civil liberty. In addition, we have seen that it is unwarranted to infer from Sallust’s writings that he held the view that non-monarchical constitutions were necessary in order for citizens to enjoy civil liberty. Sallust also makes clear that a non-monarchical constitution is insufficient to guarantee civil liberty for the citizens, for he and his characters emphasize that without provisions for a tribunate, a republican constitution — such as that which was established in Rome in 509 — does not really provide for the civil liberty of most citizens. Livy’s narrative again bears out this point (*Liv* II. 33, III. 37.5, III. 45, III. 55).³¹

Sallust also shows that even if people do live in a political society governed by a civil law under a non-monarchical government which includes provisions for something comparable to a tribunate, they still may not enjoy civil liberty in the sense of not being interfered with in the exercise of their civil rights. Another necessary condition for the existence of political societies the citizens of which may enjoy civil liberty is the presence in rulers and ruled of those qualities which Sallust commonly refers to as ‘virtues’. First of all, the ‘prowess’ of the early Romans was essential to their ability to defend their political society and liberty ‘by arms’ against foreign aggression and their ability to establish friendly relations with surrounding peoples and nations (*Cat* 6.3–5). The importance of the military virtues — courage, honesty, loyalty, temperance — is also asserted in the account of the Jugurthine war which concludes with references to the imminent threat of total destruction posed by the Gauls. In addition, in his account of the conspiracy of Catiline, Sallust shows how these virtues enter into the republic’s ability to defend itself against its own citizens who take up arms against it. We have also seen that Sallust observes how, after the annihilation of Carthage, even though the Romans

³¹ See also Wirszubski, *Libertas*, pp. 25–26, and Daniel Kapust, ‘Skinner, Pettit and Livy: The Conflict of the Orders and the Ambiguity of Republican Liberty’, *History of Political Thought*, 25 (2004), 377–401.

continued to live in a society subject to law under a republican constitution that made provisions for an empowered tribunate, the 'state changed' and the people quickly lost their civil freedom — it was that loss of freedom which the Gracchi attempted to redress. In both monographs, Sallust laments that one of the central causes of the plebeians' loss of liberty was the moral degeneration of the Roman people at large. Sallust's heroes, Cato and Marius, add that the corruption of the patrician ruling class of Rome was also a primary cause of this loss and deterioration of the republic at large (*Cat* 52.19–23; *Jug* 85.41–43).

Civil liberty depends on the existence of a political society the citizens of which are subject to civil law; a necessary condition for the existence of such a society is virtue in the governors and the governed; virtue in the governors and the governed depends on a whole way of life. Civil liberty, then, depends in part on a whole way of life.

Given his understanding of human fulfilment in terms of the exercise of mental excellence in the pursuit of glory, Sallust strongly implies throughout his writings, especially in the prefaces, that the absence of constraints imposed by civil authorities on this exercise is of paramount importance. But what activities in particular require the exercise of mental excellence and so count as ones through which we fulfill our natural ends and really live life? As we observed in Chapter 1, Sallust holds that 'there are so many and so varied intellectual pursuits by which the highest distinction may be won' (*Jug* 2.4), and he therefore regards a very wide range of human activities as ones which qualify as fulfilments of our natural ends. The freedom to engage in that wide range of activities, where freedom is understood as the simple absence of constraint, Sallust implies, is an important and valuable freedom, for it is a necessary condition for our fulfilment of our natural ends and, therefore, for our really making the most of life.

Skinner, along with Pettit, Maurizio Viroli, and Martin Dzelzainis, places Sallust's historical writing alongside the writings of Cicero, other ancient Romans, and the *Digest* of Roman law to form a larger body of classical Roman writing that forwards a coherent theory of civil liberty, one element of which is an *ideal* of liberty, an idea, that is, of the civil liberty citizens *ought* to enjoy.³² But Sallust's ideal of liberty is different in important respects from that of Cicero and the Roman nobles. Indeed, what Cicero over the course of works such as *On the Republic* and *On Laws* commonly calls 'true liberty', Memmius, Marius, and Sallust himself over the course of *The War with Jugurtha* and *The War with Catiline* commonly

³² Skinner, *Liberty Before Liberalism*, pp. 38–47; Viroli, *Machiavelli*, pp. 283–84; Dzelzainis, 'Republicanism'.

call 'servitude' and 'slavery'. And what Cicero would regard as excessive civil freedom, if not licence, is what these three figures would think of as real civil liberty. For whereas in *On the Republic* Cicero sees the nobles in the senate at the time of Scipio Amelianus as figures whose 'authority' and 'dignity' are to be respected by the people, Memmius, Marius, and Sallust see them as nothing less than arrogant 'tyrants' and 'despots' who deny the people their legal rights to share in government and to control and enjoy public property. Whereas Cicero, in *On Laws*, is clearly sympathetic with his brother Quintus's attack on the tribunate and sees its very existence essentially as a concession that had to be made for the sake of the stability of the state (a concession that leads citizens to think they are more free than they really are), Memmius, Sallust, and Macer, themselves having held that office, see it as a crucial means of limiting the nobles' unjust interference with and domination of the people. And whereas in these dialogues Cicero and his aristocratic friends and relatives see the Gracchi as villains who threatened the very stability of the state and so the preconditions of true liberty, Memmius and Sallust see them as heroic opponents of an unjust and illegal aristocratic oligarchy who fought to restore the people's legal rights and thereby establish the civil liberties they should have. Agreeing with Cicero the *optimates* that *libertas* is indeed all about legal rights and the absence of control over and restraints on the citizens' activities and property, Sallust the *popularis* does not share the elder statesman's vision of an aristocratic republic as a constitution under which citizens really have as much of it as they should have.³³

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The problem with seeing Machiavelli as a figure who transmits 'the classical theory of civil liberty' to early modern Europe is that it overlooks the differences between

³³ For observations of Sallust's alliance with the *populares*, those patricians who claimed to stand for the interests of the plebeians, see Earl, *Political Thought of Sallust*, pp. 111–19; Tiffou, *Essai*, pp. 480–85; Gian Biagio Conte, *Latin Literature: A History*, trans. by Joseph Solodow, Rev Don Fowler, and Glenn Most (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), p. 239. Ronald Syme observes Sallust's opposition to and hatred of the nobles throughout his classic commentary, though he hesitates to use the term *popularis* to refer to him in part because he observes that Sallust is at times critical of those who claimed to assert the rights of the people. See *Sallust* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964), pp. 17–18, 126, 134, 136, 166, 169. For observations of Cicero's allegiance to the *optimates*, see Conte, *Latin Literature*, pp. 177, 185, 192; Wirszubski, *Libertas*, pp. 31–65; Janet Coleman, *A History of Political Thought*, 2 vols (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), I, 241–42; Schofield, 'Cicero's Definition of *Res Publica*', p. 190; Long, 'Cicero's Politics in *De officiis*'. For Cicero's critique of the Gracchi, see *Duties* (II. 19–26); his brother Quintus reviles them in *Laws* (III. 20). For the contrast between Sallust and Cicero and most other Roman historians on the issue of land reform and the Gracchi, see Nelson, *Greek Tradition in Republican Thought*, pp. 49–59.

the classical republicans which make it difficult if not impossible to identify what this theory is. In light of the important differences *within* classical republicanism which we have observed, it is more reasonable to see Machiavelli as a figure who responds to ancient Graeco-Roman republican writing in part by way of a discussion of civil liberty which both follows and departs from it in various ways.

When in *The Prince* and the *Discourses* Machiavelli asserts that Roman citizens became free upon the expulsion of the Tarquins and contrasts the state of being free with that of being under a prince or king, he seems to think of civil freedom in terms of not being subject to the kind of power princes and kings have, regardless of how they may in fact exercise that power (*Pr* 5, 31; *D* 155, 274–76, 390–92, 441). That is to say that he seems to think of civil freedom in terms of non-domination. And though he seldom speaks *explicitly* of the citizens' possession and exercise of civil rights (and so differs in an important way from Sallust, Cicero, and Livy), he commonly discusses the populace's enjoyment of civil liberty in terms of legally protected abilities or powers to own and accumulate private property, to enjoy that property, and to take action against those they feel have slandered them. This is why it is not unreasonable to claim, as Marcia Colish does, that 'he clearly identifies freedom with the protection of private rights'.³⁴ And insofar as he does this, his thinking about civil liberty is again consistent with an understanding of civil freedom in terms of non-domination.

But things are different when he observes in the final book of the *Discourses* that the reason Tarquin the Proud was expelled was

that he had violated the laws of the kingdom and ruled tyrannically. He deprived the senate of all authority and took it into his own hands. Business which used to be transacted in public assemblies to the senate's satisfaction, he carried on in his palace, accepting the responsibility and its consequences. The result was that before long Rome had lost all the liberties she had enjoyed under previous kings. (395–96)

The crucial difference between Tarquin the Proud and earlier kings was not a matter of how the king *could* rule, but a matter of how he *in fact* ruled. Emphasizing this difference, Machiavelli here explicitly acknowledges that being subject to kings does not necessarily preclude the people's enjoyment of 'liberties' and indicates that these liberties consist in the absence of constraints that are in fact placed by kings upon the activities of citizens. He confirms this point when he observes that peoples living under the French and other monarchies and constitutions which

³⁴ Colish, 'Idea of Liberty in Machiavelli', p. 346. See also Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, p. 203, and those passages in the *Discourses* where Walker and Richardson have 'rights' and 'civil rights' even though Machiavelli does not use the word *dritti*: *D* 108, 190, 194, 282, 285, 401.

make a place for 'royal power' (*D* 110) also enjoy civil liberties and the 'civic life' Machiavelli equates with this enjoyment (*P* 17; *D* 119, 157, 176, 396–97). Moreover, in *The Prince*, he describes how both nobles and the populace may turn to monarchy in order to achieve the particular civil liberties they value most: the nobles may set up a prince with the aim of gaining the freedom 'to dominate and oppress' the people, while the people may do the same with the aim of gaining the freedom from the nobles to enjoy their property in peace and security (31–32). Finally, Machiavelli, like the ancient Roman historians, does not say that the Romans were or even felt enslaved when, under a dictator, they were subject to a 'royal prerogative' (*D* 196).

When Machiavelli speaks of laws that are required for the maintenance of liberty in a political society, he thinks of civil liberty as something that is not restricted and limited but brought into existence and assured by civil law (*D* 163, 203, 210, 214, 230, 231, 232). But he also speaks of princes who are 'subservient to the laws', peoples that are 'chained up by laws', and the possibility of either of them being 'loosed from control by the law' (*D* 256). He speaks of a people that has suddenly acquired its freedom as differing 'in no wise from a wild animal which, though by nature fierce and accustomed to the woods, has been brought up in captivity and servitude and is then loosed to rove the countryside at will' (*D* 153). Speaking in this way, Machiavelli presents civil law as something that restricts or limits the freedom of citizens understood as the absence of actual constraints placed by rulers upon their activities.

When Machiavelli writes that some cities are built by 'free men, or men dependent on others' (*D* 101), he indicates that being a free man is a matter of living in a society that is not dependent upon a foreign political society. But when he claims that men are not inclined 'to fear for their liberties' when, though living in a political society that is subject to a foreign power, they are treated by that power in a humane manner (*D* 343), he is thinking of civil freedom in terms of the absence of actual constraints placed upon specific activities citizens wish to pursue. Speaking again of civil liberty in terms of 'liberties', Machiavelli also indicates that civil liberty is something one will have *more or less* of as there are more or fewer actual constraints placed by one's own government or a foreign power to which one is subject upon those specific activities one may wish to pursue.

Besides indicating that Machiavelli uses the term 'liberty' to mean different things when he is discussing the relationships between humans and their governments, these and other passages highlight some of the difficulties of finding in him a coherent account of the *conditions* under which citizens enjoy 'liberty'. Though he often speaks as though citizens can be assured of their liberty only if they are

living in a state that is autonomous, a state whose actions and laws are determined by way of procedures that are entirely internal to it, he also makes clear that citizens in states that are dependent upon and subject to a foreign power may be free in the sense of not in fact being interfered with in the pursuit of some of their chosen ends, and in the sense of enjoying some civil rights (where rights are understood as powers and privileges protected by civil law). This is implied by Machiavelli's account of how Rome in some cases permitted towns which it defeated in war and over which it claimed to hold *imperium* to 'live under their own laws', and 'retain their own form of government and their prestige' (D 341). It is made explicit when, addressing those who have conquered a people and wish to maintain dominion over them, Machiavelli observes that men 'fear for their liberties less, the more humane and the more easy-going is your treatment of them' (D 343; see also 281, 350–53, 396–97; P 16–17). In addition, though he often speaks as though citizens can be assured of their 'liberty' only under a republican constitution, we have seen that he also commonly indicates that monarchy and mixed constitutions which, by definition, make a place for a monarch are entirely compatible with some version and extent of civil freedom and the civic life. This possibility is especially clear in Machiavelli's celebration of Sparta (in which government was shared by two kings, a senate, and an ephorate), and his observation (one that is also made by Cicero, Sallust, and Livy) that the move to a republican constitution in 509 which 'freed Rome' did not abolish the 'royal power' but merely transferred it to two consuls (D 110–11). Thus, while Machiavelli often speaks as though living in a political society that is not subject to a foreign power and living in a political society with a non-monarchical constitution are necessary conditions for the enjoyment of 'liberty', he sometimes clearly indicates that this is not the case.

Machiavelli identifies, though again often with considerable ambivalence, several further details of the situation in which members of political societies may have and enjoy civil freedoms with some security. Though sometimes speaking of law in terms of constraints on civil freedom, Machiavelli's prevailing argument is, as Skinner and others observe, that civil law is a foundation of civil liberty.³⁵ And though he sees the fighting between the nobles and the plebeians at the time of the Gracchi as amounting to a violent factionalism that led to the downfall of the republic and the liberty its citizens enjoyed, he insists, contrary to the ancients, that 'in every republic there are two different dispositions, that of the populace and that of the upper class and [. . .] all legislation favourable to liberty is brought about by the clash

³⁵ See Skinner, 'Republican Ideal of Political Liberty'; Viroli, *Machiavelli*, 121–31; Colish, 'Idea of Liberty in Machiavelli', p. 347.

between them' (*D* 113). But, as we observed in Chapter 3, Machiavelli follows Sallust and Livy in placing considerable emphasis on the tribunate, or some institution comparable to it, as a safeguard of 'liberty' in republics. This derives in part from the fact that among the powers of the tribunes was that 'of being able to indict before the people or some magistrate or court such citizens as have committed any offence prejudicial to the freedom of the state'. 'No authority more useful and necessary', Machiavelli argues by way of the example of Coriolanus, 'can be granted to those appointed to look after the liberties of a state' than this (*D* 124). Machiavelli also emphasizes the importance of institutions which keep the populace poor: 'the most useful institution to have in a state which enjoys freedom', he writes in a late chapter on poverty, 'is one that keeps the citizens poor' (*D* 475). In order for the people to be content with their poverty, it is essential that, like the Romans, they have 'the knowledge that poverty did not bar you from any office or from any honour, and that virtue was sought out no matter in whose house it dwelt' (*D* 475). The argument thus seems to be that a socio-political life that functions in accordance with meritocratic principles is sufficient to make people content with little which, in turn, inclines them actually to live with little. And a populace that lives contentedly with little is, for Machiavelli, well qualified for the enjoyment and maintenance of civil liberty. Following Livy, Machiavelli also grants great importance to the limited tenure of political and military office as an institutional safeguard of civil liberty — had the pernicious consequences of the 'prolongation of military commands' been recognized sooner in Rome, 'freedom would have lasted longer in Rome, and life there would have been perhaps more tranquil' (*D* 473). Finally, in both *The Prince* and the *Discourses*, he places great emphasis on a citizen army as the principal means of avoiding the subjugation to a foreign power which may but need not deeply impinge upon the enjoyment of civil liberty.³⁶

But Machiavelli makes clear in the *Discourses* that even if many of these laws and institutions are in place, citizens may still well not enjoy liberty. For 'a people which has become wholly corrupt, cannot even for a brief space, no, not even for a moment, enjoy its freedom' (*D* 154). As Skinner observes, Machiavelli sees 'virtue' in the people as a precondition for their enjoyment and maintenance of what he calls 'liberty'.³⁷ The preconditions for virtue observed in the previous chapter,

³⁶ See Colish, 'Idea of Liberty in Machiavelli', pp. 341–42; Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, pp. 183–218.

³⁷ Skinner, 'Republican Ideal of Political Liberty', pp. 303–04; 'Republican Virtues in an Age of Princes', pp. 147, 154–55; 'Machiavelli on *virtù* and the Maintenance of Liberty', pp. 160–85; 'Idea of Negative Liberty', pp. 202–05.

then, are also preconditions of liberty. This means that while the civil law will in many cases be of great efficacy in maintaining liberty in a political society (for it helps to make men good), in some cases it will be entirely inefficacious. For Machiavelli holds that once a populace has begun to grow corrupt, some form of single-person rule is required to re-establish virtue in them (*D* 164, 246). In order for civil liberty to be sustained or re-established in a republic, it will thus sometimes be necessary for a single person to abolish the republic and abrogate the civil liberties the people enjoyed under it.

Understanding civil liberty and the conditions under which various agents enjoy it in this way, Machiavelli displays inclinations to share in the consensus amongst the ancients that having and exercising civil liberties, especially the liberties to participate in government and judiciary processes, is of value to human beings because the exercise of such liberties is one of the principal means by which humans perfect what they are by nature and achieve happiness. This is because he is not entirely free of the ancient view of man as the rational, political animal. But being more strongly inclined to see humans as a raw material which, by virtue of education and upbringing, becomes a creature, usually miserable and corrupt, that has no ends or purposes other than those it sets for itself out of its own desires and passions, Machiavelli is also strongly inclined to see particular civic liberties as being valuable to humans simply because they need them in order to fulfill those ends and purposes. Because he sees different people and groups of people having different desires (some of which move out of different judgements about what is valuable), and because civil liberty in some cases is necessary for these agents to fulfill those desires and in other cases prevents them from doing so, Machiavelli sees particular civil liberties as being of different value to different individuals and groups. Much of this is on display in his celebrated discussion of how 'cities have never increased either in dominion or wealth, unless they have been independent' (*D* 275). Here Machiavelli argues that the peoples of old detested tyrants and 'were so fond of liberty and held the word itself in such esteem' (*D* 276) because they believed that (1) only a people that enjoyed civil liberty could achieve those forms of worldly wealth, power, and reputation, and (2) wealth, power, and glory were the highest goods for man. Having been taught by their religion 'to ascribe less esteem to worldly honour', and to believe that 'man's highest good [is] humility, abnegation, and contempt for mundane things' (*D* 277–78), the moderns, on the other hand, place much less value upon the civil liberties which would permit them to achieve worldly honour, or what Machiavelli often calls 'greatness' (*grandezza*). Machiavelli thus here sees the value that living in a free political society has to the

members of that society as something that depends on what that people, mainly as a result of its religious upbringing, takes to be its highest good and desires.

Machiavelli makes the same kind of point when he discusses the value specific civil liberties may hold for various agents within republics. Since in all republics, 'the nobles wish to dominate and the common people desire not to be dominated' (*D* 116; *Pr* 31–32), liberty in the sense of the absence of constraints placed by nobles upon other nobles and common citizens — and this is what Machiavelli sometimes means by 'liberty' — is of the greatest value *to the commons* since it fulfills one of their deepest desires. And Machiavelli regards this fact as a considerable argument in favour of making the populace rather than the nobles 'the guardians of liberty' (*D* 116). It may appear that 'liberty' understood in this way is of little value *to the nobles*, and to anyone else who desires to oppress and dominate the populace. This, however, is not the case. For Machiavelli observes that the civil liberty the populace of Rome enjoyed through their tribunes was of some benefit to the Roman nobles who wished to oppress them in that it served to protect some nobles from being dominated by others (*D* 233). In addition, elaborating on a point he may have found in Cicero's dialogues with his aristocratic friends, Machiavelli claims in both *The Prince* and the *Discourses* that one of the principal means by which a prince may maintain his dominion over a populace is ruling in accordance with laws, ruling, that is, in such a way that the people enjoy the freedoms that they have by law. He emphasizes that ruling in accordance with law is a means by which princes may establish the 'security' which 'the vast bulk of those who demand freedom' desire, and he explicitly observes that in so ruling, princes can satisfy the populace's demand for freedom 'in part' (*D* 155–56). In order to hold their principalities, princes should, he later advises, follow the example of the early kings of Rome who, ruling in accordance with law, permitted Romans to enjoy the 'liberties' of which they were deprived when Tarquin began to break the law (*D* 395–96). They should follow the example of Timoleon the Corinthian and Aratus the Sicyonian, princes whose rule proves that 'when men are well governed, they do not go about looking for *further* liberty' (*D* 396–97; my emphasis; see also the discussion of the Roman emperors (*D* 137)).

Machiavelli makes the same point in connection with princes or republics that wish to dominate entire peoples they have conquered. In his discussion of the French subjection of Genoa and the Roman treatment of the Privernates (*D* 341–43, 346–51), for example, he makes clear that the practice of allowing a conquered people various civil liberties, including those of living under their own laws and forms of government and those of citizenship of the conquering nation — the practice of 'caressing' the conquered as Machiavelli puts it (*D* 350) — facilitates the

holding of *imperium* over them (see also *Pr* 16). Indeed, it is because it understood that it could enjoy security and a significant degree of civil liberty under a generous and humane foreign power that the city of Pistoia, that loved liberty as much as other Italian cities, 'came of her own accord under the dominion of Florence' (*D* 343). Whether you are a prince or a republic wishing to dominate a conquered populace, or a single person or faction wishing to dominate the populace of your own political society, that populace's enjoyment of a limited number of specific liberties defined by civil law, Machiavelli advises, may be of considerable value to you.

Machiavelli also indicates that the value some specific civil liberties, such as the liberty to possess and bear arms, may have to various agents is contingent upon the ambitions of citizens and their political societies at large. If a political society, be it a principality or a republic, wishes to acquire and maintain dominion over other political societies, then the freedom of the populace to possess and bear arms is of the utmost importance and value to it, since an armed populace, Machiavelli argues, is a necessary condition for such an achievement: 'without a large population, and this well armed, such a republic will never be able to grow, or to hold its own should it grow' (*D* 122). If, however, a political society does not harbor an ambition for this dimension of *grandezza*, but places greater value on civil order and tranquility, then this freedom will be of less value to that society at large, and may even be pernicious, for by arming its citizens, Machiavelli observes, Rome 'gave to its plebs alike strength, increase and endless opportunities for commotion' (*D* 121). Citizen armies will of course always be of value to political societies wishing to avoid being subjugated by a foreign power. But the value of the freedom of *all* members of a relatively large populace to arm themselves is somewhat compromised in relation to those political societies that wish not to expand and dominate other peoples but to live in peace by the fact that that freedom is frequently the source of civil unrest.

For Machiavelli, the value that various civil liberties may have for individuals and groups of people with particular goals in mind is contingent not only upon the nature of those goals and the various degrees of intensity with which they are committed to them, but also upon their virtue (here he stands in agreement with Aristotle). Thus, in order to make his point that 'institutions and laws made in the early days of a republic when men were good, no longer serve their purpose when men have become bad', he observes that the freedom to apply for magistracies that was enjoyed by Roman citizens was valuable to those desiring the stability and strength of the republic because, while they were virtuous, 'only such citizens applied for posts as judged themselves worthy to fill them [. . .]'. However, 'this procedure, when the city became corrupt, was extremely harmful; because not

those who had more virtue, but those who had more power, applied for magistracies, and the powerless, though virtuous, refrained from applying through fear' (*D* 161–62). The same may be said of the freedom of the tribunes and citizens to propose laws 'in regard to which every citizen was entitled to speak either in favour of it or against, prior to a decision being reached' (*D* 162). As long as they were virtuous, 'this institution was good, because it is always a good thing that anyone anxious to serve the public should be able to propose his plan'. Once, however, 'the citizens had become perverse, this institution became a nuisance; because only the powerful proposed laws, and this for the sake, not of their common liberties, but to augment their own power' (*D* 162). Citing these examples, Machiavelli observes that, in the hands of a corrupt populace, specific civil liberties such as the freedom to apply for office and the freedom to propose law, rather than being of value to those citizens (if there remain any) who might wish to preserve a great republic and not be oppressed by various factions, may in fact be not just worthless, but pernicious. On the other hand, such civil liberties in the hands of a corrupt populace may well be of considerable value to those powerful individuals and factions whose ambition is to tyrannize and achieve greatness for themselves.

Though Machiavelli recognizes that the value of civil liberty to human agents is contingent upon their desires and ambitions, he still on occasion grants some kind of priority to some desires and value judgements over others and, on that basis, presents a vision of the kind and extent of civil liberty human beings *should* and *rightly* enjoy in their political societies. In his discussion of the ancients' love of liberty, for example, he displays his dissatisfaction with, if not contempt for, the moderns and the interpretation of Christianity which has led them to scorn civic greatness and therefore undervalue civil liberty. Proceeding to observe that Christianity itself 'wishes us to love and honour' the fatherland 'and to train ourselves to be such that we may defend it', Machiavelli also suggests that the desire for civic greatness and the liberty that enables that desire to be fulfilled are privileged in the sense that they are sanctioned by Christianity. Though he does not pursue this line of argument in the *Discourses*, he nevertheless shows some inclination to regard the desire for civil liberty and civic greatness as being superior in some important way to other desires. And on the basis of this judgement, he shows some inclination to see Roman republican liberty, because it was in part the fulfilment of that desire, as an ideal of liberty. Insofar as the liberty of citizens living in that great and 'perfect republic' is the ideal of liberty, he may thus be seen to assert that people should live in political societies which, as a whole, are self-governing and not dependent upon other political societies for any kind of command or rule. They should live within political societies in which the nobles' ambition to oppress the populace is

severely limited by the power of the consuls, the tribunes, and the law, and within which the ambition of the common citizens to live in security and not to be oppressed by the nobles is to a very large extent fulfilled, though their ambition to dominate the nobles (which Machiavelli also occasionally notes) is not. The common citizens should enjoy liberties of bearing arms, speaking, proposing legislation, contracting marriage, holding military and political office, participating in government through elected representatives, bringing indictments against those they feel are harmful to the state, possessing and enjoying in security their property. And within this ideal political society, the law, while limiting the freedom of citizens in some ways, at the same time protects specific liberties by setting penalties for and inspiring fear in those who would behave in such a way as to prevent others from exercising those liberties recognized by law. All in all, Machiavelli's ideal of liberty moving out of his admiration for republican Rome is closer to that of the *popularis* Sallust than it is to that of the *optimatus* Cicero.³⁸

But however much Machiavelli approves of the Roman desire for greatness and civil liberty, and however much he admires the Romans' ability to fulfill that desire by way of establishing a republic, he cannot reasonably be seen to be consistently presenting this as the ideal of liberty *for mankind*. First of all, one of the principal reasons Machiavelli affirms Roman republican liberty and the particular mode of civic life he associates with it is that it was well suited to the desire 'to expand, as Rome did, both in dominion and in power' (*D* 122). That is to say that Machiavelli makes it quite clear that in affirming Roman republican liberty, he affirms a mode of civil liberty which permitted the nation to constitute itself as a prince which effectively pursued its will to expand and rule over other nations and their citizens for the sake of its own glory (*D* 256). Viewed from this perspective, Machiavelli's affirmation of *Roman* liberty amounts to an affirmation of the servitude which that liberty enabled the Romans to impose on all of the peoples and nations surrounding it (though, as we have seen, those subject to the Roman *imperium* often enjoyed considerable civil liberties).³⁹

³⁸ For limited confirmation of this point, see Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, p. 186; Blythe, *Ideal Government and the Mixed Constitution*, p. 293; Sullivan, *Machiavelli, Hobbes, and the Formation of Liberal Republicanism*, pp. 31–79.

³⁹ For Machiavelli's support for imperialism, see Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, pp. 198–99, 213–18; Hulliung, *Citizen Machiavelli*, throughout, but especially Chapter 2. See also Mikael Hörnqvist's argument that 'the civic humanist notion of *Florentina libertas* was not only compatible with Florentine territorial ambitions but inherently imperialist', in 'The Two Myths of Civic Humanism', in *Renaissance Civic Humanism*, ed. by Hankins, pp. 105–40 (pp. 108–09). For confirmation of this

Secondly, throughout *The Prince* and the *Discourses*, Machiavelli commonly speaks as though the desire for great wealth and power is just one desire among many. The Roman republic, that is, is the ideal not under all circumstances and for all peoples, and not even for all members of that republic, but only for that body politic as a whole and the particular goals and ambitions it had set for itself. For those who value other things and who have other ambitions and desires, the ideal will be somewhat different. Thus, for example, though he recognizes some difficulties in fulfilling it amongst aggressive neighbours, Machiavelli displays considerable admiration for those political societies that do not desire to expand as Rome did, but wish to live in small, stable, well-ordered, virtuous, self-contained republics for relatively long periods of time. And in relation to this desire, it is the civic life of Sparta, rather than of Rome, which he presents as the ideal (the modern German republics are also exemplary (*D* 335)). In Sparta, the citizens were constrained by law from accumulating and enjoying wealth as the Romans eventually did, and ‘offices in the city were open but to few citizens and from them the plebs were kept out; nor did it desire to have them since the nobles never ill-treated the plebs’ (*D* 120). In relation to the Spartans and those political societies that share their goals and ambitions, the ideal mode of liberty is considerably more restricted than it is for political societies such as Rome.

Finally, Machiavelli’s admiration for Rome and Sparta does not prevent him from acknowledging that some men will always also have desires and ambitions to rule as princes, to oppress, and to tyrannize. Though he sometimes registers his objections to such desires and ambitions, he often displays no objections to them and simply presents them as other natural forms of human desire with their own legitimacy. That is why in *The Prince* and the *Discourses* he counsels those animated by such desires and ambitions not on how to destroy or deny them, but on how to fulfill them. Needless to say, the ideal of civil liberty for men of this nature is different yet again from the ideals exemplified by Sparta and Rome.

Paradise Lost

We have attempted to identify what the republicans say about civil liberty in part by considering how they use words such as ‘liberty’ and ‘slavery’ when they are

point, see Parel, *Machiavellian Cosmos*, p. 96; Rahe, ‘Situating Machiavelli’, p. 291. Machiavelli’s thinking here is consistent with the thinking of the Romans who, according to Brunt, understood ‘dominion over others as an extension of freedom’. See ‘*Libertas* in the Republic’, p. 312.

discussing the relations between humans and the governments of the political societies of which they are members. We have not considered those passages where the republican authors use these terms to discuss the relations between humans and God, for we have been assuming that a person's freedom, or lack thereof, from God to do things such as to believe or to obey God is not a matter of a person's *civil* freedom. It is a matter of a freedom of a different kind, what some theologians call 'metaphysical freedom'. From this it might appear to follow that Milton's use of the terms 'liberty' and 'servitude' to describe the condition of angels with respect to God in *Paradise Lost* does not constitute a treatment of civil liberty, or a representation from which one might reasonably infer anything about civil freedom in human society. But, as many critics have pointed out, Milton uses a wide range of terms besides 'liberty' and 'servitude' which he and other seventeenth-century Englishmen commonly used to refer to the political life of humans to describe God (including the Son), the angels (including Satan and the fallen angels), their actions, and their interrelationships.⁴⁰ Indeed, he does this so comprehensively that it seems reasonable to view the condition of God and the angels as one which has important things in common with the socio-political condition of humans. Viewed in this way, Milton's representation of heaven and hell does indeed seem to convey what Lewalski calls 'political lessons'.⁴¹ But just as the constitutional lessons conveyed by this representation differ from those conveyed by the republicans so, too, do many of its lessons about civil liberty.

Satan and the rebel angels, both before and after the rebellion, assert that, being subject to God and the Son, they are not 'free'. Since not just they but the faithful angels as well as God and the Son describe God and the Son as kings who occupy thrones and rule subjects, this amounts to the proposition that they do not have *civil* liberty. Satan leads up to this accusation by expressing to Beelzebub his objections to the divine 'Decree' and 'new Laws' (V. 674, 679) by virtue of which the Son became their 'Head', 'Lord', and 'King'. The accusation, its meaning, and its rationale become more clear once Satan, having drawn under false pretexts a third of the angels in heaven to his throne in the north, formally addresses them: they are 'eclipt under the name / Of King anointed'. This new king will visit them to

⁴⁰ See Bennett, *Reviving Liberty*; Worden, 'Milton's Republicanism and the Tyranny of Heaven'; Achinstein, *Milton and the Revolutionary Reader*; Dzelzainis, 'Milton's Classical Republicanism'; Fallon, *Divided Empire*; Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic*; Loewenstein, *Representing Revolution*; Richard Strier, 'Milton's Fetters, or, Why Eden Is Better than Heaven', *Milton Studies*, 38 (2000), 169–97 (pp. 174–87).

⁴¹ Lewalski, 'Paradise Lost and Milton's Politics', p. 142.

receive 'Knee-tribute' and 'prostration vile', a kind of service they must give unless they 'cast off this Yoke' (V. 776–86). It is important to see that, pursuing his immediate purposes of fomenting rebellion, Satan does not claim that, by virtue of being subject to the monarchy of God, they are not free. Slyly conceding that, before the anointment of the son, they were in fact free, he indicates, in a way that is not crystal clear, that it is the appointment of the Son as monarch that compromises this freedom. The angels are

free,
Equally free; for Orders and Degrees
Jar not with liberty, but well consist.
Who can in reason then or right assume
Monarchy over such as live by right
His equals, if in power and splendor less,
In freedom equal? or can introduce
Law and Edict on us, who without law
Err not? much less for this to be our Lord,
And look for adoration to th'abuse
Of those Imperial Titles which assert
Our being ordain'd to govern, not to serve? (V. 791–802)

There is just a hint here that it is God's monarchy on its own that curtails their freedom, since God has introduced new law and issued a new edict in appointing the Son as monarch. But since it is not God but the Son who has just assumed 'Monarchy over such as live by right / His equals', since it is the Son whom God has just confessed 'Lord' of all angels, and since, as Satan says to Beelzebub, it is the Son who intends to issue 'new commands' and 'give Laws' (V. 691–93), Satan gives the impression that it is the Son's monarchy that compromises the liberty he and all angels enjoyed under God's monarchy.

Having eased into the fomentation by calling on the idea of a civil liberty that existed under God and that has been or will be compromised by the appointment of the Son as monarch, Satan quietly discards it. Addressing Abdiel on the battlefield, he says,

At first I thought that Liberty and Heav'n
To heav'nly Souls had been all one; but now
I see that most through sloth had rather serve,
Minist'ring Spirits, train'd up in Feast and Song;
Such hast thou arm'd, the Minstrelsy of Heav'n,
Servility with freedom to contend,
As both thir deeds compar'd this day shall prove. (VI. 164–70)

Nothing here about servitude as the result of God's appointment of the Son as the Lord and King of all angels. It now seems as though simply serving in heaven is the problem. After the first day of battle, Satan continues to speak as though the liberty for which they fight is the freedom from the monarchy of God, but he adds that the aim of the rebellion includes other things, for he has found his 'Companions dear [. . .] worthy not of Liberty alone, / Too mean pretense, but what we more affect, / Honor, Dominion, Glory, and renown' (VI. 419–22). It is, however, notable that at least one rebel, Nisroch, remembers Satan's first interpretation of the loss of liberty — an event that was caused by the appointment of the Son as King and Messiah — for he thinks of Satan as 'Deliverer from *new* Lords, leader to free / Enjoyment of our right as Gods' (VI. 451–52, my emphasis).

Once they have fallen, Satan and the rebel angels continue to assert that, subject to the monarchy of God — Son or no Son — one cannot be free. That monarchy is in fact, as Satan informs Beelzebub as they float on the burning lake, not really a monarchy but 'the Tyranny of Heav'n' (I. 124), whereas Hell, though a realm of pain and misery, is a realm beyond that tyranny, a realm in which Satan, at least, may 'reign', and therefore a realm of civil freedom for all: 'Here at least / We shall be free', he tells Beelzebub once they have reached burning land (I. 258–59). During the Stygian council with which Book II begins, God is again identified as a tyrant (II. 59) and a 'King', but one who, as Beelzebub observes, has extended his 'Empire' to Hell which he will rule 'with Iron Sceptre', even if he rules heaven with a golden one (II. 325–28). This is why, even were God to forgive them, they would, according to Mammon, have to reject the offer; to accept it would really mean an intolerable 'new Subjection', for they would be bound to

receive
 Strict Laws impos'd, to celebrate his Throne
 With warbl'd Hymns, and to his Godhead sing
 Forc't Halleluiahs; while he Lordly sits
 Our envied Sovran, and his Altar breathes
 Ambrosial Odors and Ambrosial Flowers,
 Our servile offerings. (II. 240–46)

Existence in heaven under the monarchy of God is, in short, a 'state / Of splendid vassalage' (II. 251–52), in part because they are forced, on pain of being 'cast out from God and blessed vision', to celebrate and to praise God. Hellish society, on the other hand, as one not subject to the rule of God, could, at least on Mammon's account, be made into one in which rational agents can enjoy civil liberty, where this consists in part in not being forced to praise God. That is why Mammon, who,

as some have pointed out, sounds like Milton and other supporters of the English revolutionary regime,⁴² recommends that the fallen angels

seek
Our own good from ourselves, and from our own
Live to ourselves, though in this vast recess,
Free, and to none accountable, preferring
Hard liberty before the easy yoke
Of servile Pomp. (II. 252–57)

Though there is difference of opinion amongst the rebel angels as to what course of action to pursue after the war, there is a strong consensus amongst them that seeking pardon and returning to heaven is not an option, for that would mean returning to a state of bondage.

This interpretation of the ‘Throne and Monarchy of God’ as a tyranny, and of the alternative regime in Hell as one under which all may enjoy civil freedom is mistaken, and is intended by Milton to be seen by his readers as being mistaken, though seductive. This is evident, first of all, from the equivocations of Satan’s own argumentation, some of which we have already observed, some of which are revealed by Gabriel when, after finding Satan in the form of a toad at the ear of Eve, he demolishes Satan’s claim to be ‘Patron of liberty’ (IV. 958), and some of which have been identified by critics.⁴³ It is evident when, on Niphates’ top, Satan confesses to himself that he fought not for the liberty of himself and his followers, but out of ‘Pride and worse Ambition’ to usurp God’s power; that God’s service was easy and just; that he seduced the other angels to follow him; and that he himself has assumed monarchy over his peers, since the fallen angels ‘adore’ him while he sits ‘on the Throne of Hell / With diadem and Sceptre high advanc’d’ (IV. 32–113). It is evident, too, in Abdiel’s direct challenges to Satan.

Labelling Satan’s charge that the freedom and therefore the dignity of the angels has been diminished by God’s appointment of the Son as their King and his decree that all adore and obey him as ‘argument blasphemous, false and proud’ (V. 809), Abdiel proceeds to observe that God did not endue his only Son ‘With Regal Sceptre’ simply because he was his son and because, being partial to his own flesh and blood, he wanted to give him something special. He did so ‘by right’. And because he did so in this manner, God’s decree that the angels worship him and

⁴² See Dzelzainis, ‘Milton’s Classical Republicanism’, pp. 23–24.

⁴³ See, for example, Bennett, *Reviving Liberty*; Loewenstein, *Representing Revolution*, pp. 203–26.

confess him 'rightful King' is 'just'. Acting in this way, God, according to Abdiel, has not affronted their dignity by diminishing their freedom, but in fact acted in a way that is perfectly consistent with their freedom and their dignity and his behaviour towards them in the past:

by experience taught we know how good,
And of our good, and of our dignity
How provident he is, how far from thought
To make us less, bent rather to exalt
Our happy state under one Head more near
United. (V. 826–31)

Continuing to take issue with Satan's proud argument, Abdiel then reveals part of the basis for his claim that God appointed the Son as king 'by right': the Son is superior in important respects to each angel, and to all of them taken together, since it was through him that God created them all. It was by him

As by his Word the mighty Father made
All things, ev'n thee, and all the Spirits of Heav'n
By him created in thir bright degrees,
Crown'd them with Glory, and to thir Glory nam'd
Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers,
Essential Powers, (V. 836–41)

Having provided a rationale for the superiority of the Son to the angels, Abdiel then reiterates his main claims that the reign of the Son over the angels does not diminish them but further exalts them, and that whatever laws the Son may proclaim will serve not to limit their freedom but only to do them further honour:

nor by his Reign obscur'd,
But more illustrious made, since he the Head
One of our number thus reduc't becomes,
His Laws our Laws, all honor to him done
Returns our own. (V. 841–45)

When Abdiel later confronts Satan on the battlefield, the issue of civil liberty is even more directly addressed, and Abdiel provides a more explicit account of what it is to have civil freedom. In response to Satan's charge that the faithful angels exist in a state of servitude, Abdiel retorts,

Unjustly thou depriv'st it with the name
Of *Servitude* to serve whom God ordains,
Or Nature; God and Nature bid the same,
When he who rules is worthiest, and excels
Them whom he governs. This is servitude,

To serve th'unwise, or him who hath rebell'd
 Against his worthier, as thine now serve thee,
 Thyself not free, but to thyself enthrall'd; (VI. 174–81)

The fact that one is subject to and in fact serves a monarch does not necessarily mean that one exists in a state of servitude, Abdiel observes. As long as that monarch is 'worthiest, and excels / Them whom he governs', one can be subject to and serve him without forfeiting civil liberty. It is important to see that in saying this, Abdiel is not saying that in order for civil liberty to exist under a ruler that ruler must be of absolute worth, or be excellent in some absolute sense. He is not saying, that is, that one must be God or the Son in order to be a monarch under whom one's subjects are free. He is rather saying (as Aristotle does) that, as long as the ruler is, *compared to those he rules*, more worthy, as long as he or she excels *in relation to* those who are ruled, those who are ruled do not exist in a state of servitude. This is why, Abdiel might have added, the angels in heaven who served 'Princely Dignities, / And Powers that erst in Heaven sat on Thrones' (I. 359–60) were not enslaved, and why the orders who served those 'Scepter'd Angels' who 'sat as Princes, whom the supreme King / Exalted to such power, and gave to rule, / Each in his Hierarchy, the Orders bright' were not enslaved either (I. 734–37). Because, while they had been faithful, the angels who were princes sitting on their thrones in heaven were, compared to the orders under them, worthier, those orders who served them were free, even though these princes were neither God nor the Son. It is rather when one serves one who is not, in relation to all others in the community, worthiest, or one who is not wise (here there is no relative standard), or one who has rebelled against one who is worthier, that serving amounts to servitude. Thus, because Satan is unwise and has rebelled against his worthier, the angels who serve him exist in a state of servitude; because Abdiel and the faithful angels serve monarchs who are wise and worthier than them all, their service does not compromise their freedom.

This view of civil liberty is consistent with Michael's account in the final books of how, after the flood, Noah's descendants live 'Long time in peace by Families and Tribes / Under paternal rule' (XII. 23–24). Michael does not say that families and tribes living under the rule of fathers are living in a state of servitude, presumably because, still fearing the deity, these fathers are just, and just masters do not abrogate the liberty of their subjects. It is also consistent with Adam's remarks when, responding to Michael's description of Nimrod's tyranny, he observes that God gave man 'Dominion absolute' over the animal kingdom, but 'human left from human free' (XII. 68–71). Adam on this occasion does not say that monarchical forms of government abrogate civil liberty; he says that no human or group

of humans can claim a divine sanction for laying claim to dominion over other humans. But this is entirely consistent with the view that humans are still free to subject themselves to whatever form of government they wish, including monarchy, and that subjecting themselves to this form of government is not tantamount to surrendering civil liberty. When, finally, Michael proceeds to describe the Israelites under the Patriarchs and Kings, he does not say they exist in a state of bondage. It is rather under the Pharaoh — yes, a ‘King’ (XII. 165, 205), but also a ‘lawless Tyrant’ who makes them slaves — that they do so (XII. 165–75).

It thus seems reasonable to infer from the way in which both characters and the narrator use terms such as ‘liberty’ and ‘servitude’ in discussing the relations between rulers and ruled in heavenly, hellish, and postlapsarian societies that the poem does not conform with the ‘neo-Roman’ theory of liberty that, according to Skinner and others, defines republican tradition and is reaffirmed by Milton in his poetry and prose. For according to that theory, one forfeits civil liberty if one is subject to a lord — no matter if that lord be just and reasonable — whereas Milton describes societies the members of which are free even though they are subject to princes, lords, heads, or kings. According to this poem, one may have and exercise civil liberty under princes, lords, and kings who are rational and just; it is only under princes, lords, and kings who are irrational and unjust that one is deprived of civil liberty.

That the poem differs from Roman ideas about non-domination is further evident from the fact, recently observed by Annabel Patterson, that there is very little ‘rights talk’ in it and, indeed, the rest of Milton’s poetry.⁴⁴ True, Satan and the fallen angels sometimes refer to ‘rights’: Beelzebub wonders if God will treat the fallen angels as ‘his thralls / By right of War’ (I. 149–50); Azazel claims ‘as his right’ the honour of raising Satan’s standard (I. 534); Satan claims to be created the leader of the angels in hell by ‘just right’ (II. 18); Belial argues against the project raised by Moloch of regaining ‘Our own right lost’ by war (II. 230–31); speaking to the angels, Satan asks ‘Who can in reason then or right assume / Monarchy over such as live by right / His equals’ (V. 794–96); Nisroch refers to the rebel angels’ ‘right as Gods’ (VI. 452). God, the Son, and the faithful angels, too, occasionally refer to ‘rights’: Gabriel claims that some angels ‘have power and right / To question’ Satan’s presence in Eden (IV. 881–82); God, speaking sarcastically, refers to Satan as one who will in battle try ‘what our Power is, or our right’ (V. 728); Abdiel says the Son is by ‘right endu’d’ with the regal scepter (V. 815); God says that the

⁴⁴ Annabel Patterson, ‘Why Is There No Rights Talk in Milton’s Poetry?’, in *Milton, Rights and Liberties*, ed. by Christophe Tournu and Neil Forsyth (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007), pp. 197–209.

Son 'by right of merit Reigns' (VI. 43), and that to be King is the Son's 'deserved right' (VI. 709). But these sparse references to rights hardly amount to a representation of heavenly society that implies it is comparable to the Roman republic within which the freedom of citizens is defined in terms of legally defined rights such as the *provocatio*. Moreover, in the final book of the poem, the only occasions on which 'rights' are mentioned are when Adam observes man's right over the animals granted by God (XII. 68) and when Michael observes that the Son is born 'Barr'd of his right' to the throne of David (XII. 360). In the poem's major representation of the human socio-political condition after the first coming, there is not a single reference to those 'civil rights' or 'legal rights' which are defined by civil law and which are at the heart of Roman republican discussions of civil freedom.

As we have seen, however, many of the republicans do not espouse what Skinner calls 'the neo-Roman' theory of liberty either. In showing that civil liberty can exist under lords, kings, and princes, the poem is thus consistent with Aristotelian and *some* Roman discussions of civil liberty, as well as the antiformalist dimension of republican constitutional thought. In addition, it is important to see that the representation of heavenly and hellish politics may still reasonably be seen to imply that civil liberty is not restricted by just civil law, but is made possible by it. For, as God observes to Abdiel, Satan and the rebel angels 'reason for thir Law refuse, / Right reason for thir Law' (VI. 41–42). Conceived of as a political society, heavenly society under the monarchy of God is subject to a law, where that law is a manifestation of God's will, but also of the reason that God shares with man and angel. And as Joan Bennett observes, the poem dramatizes how 'when Satan abandoned law to seek power, he gave up forever his ability to preserve his own liberty and that of his subjects'; the Son, on the other hand, Bennett observes, 'retains liberty by living out the law of his nature'.⁴⁵ If, as the massive representation of it as a 'state' encourages us to do, we think of heavenly society as a political society and the law that governs it as a civil law, we are obliged to think of civil liberty as something that is not restrained by civil law, but made possible and fulfilled by it. And if this is one of the political lessons of the poem, then the conception of civil liberty forwarded by the poem is best seen as neither republican nor neo-Roman, but as rationalist, as opposed to voluntarist. For, as James Tully explains, whereas 'for the voluntarist, law is *regulative* of an antecedently defined freedom, restraining and opposing it', for the rationalist, 'law is *constitutive* of freedom, perfecting or completing it as its final cause. Law is not the conventional means to control man's natural desire to do as he pleases; it is the natural guide to lead man to the fulfilment of his

⁴⁵ Bennett, *Reviving Liberty*, pp. 51, 66.

traditional inclination to do the good'. Thus, for a rationalist, such as John Locke, 'following civil law in a rationally ordered polity is not the diminution of liberty but the realization of civil liberty'.⁴⁶

On this way of thinking about civil liberty, a non-monarchical constitution is obviously not required in order for members of a political society to be free. Indeed, the issue of constitutional form is really quite beside the point in relation to concerns with maintaining and protecting civil liberty understood in this way. The essential thing is a civil law that is just and rational, for such a law does not limit freedom, as voluntarists such as Hobbes would claim, but perfects and completes it. In addition, we have seen that Milton seems to adhere to the republican view that the members of any political society cannot enjoy civil freedom unless they are virtuous, where virtue is understood generally in terms of the freedom of the will from passion and appetite. But we have also seen that the rationale for this view is different in an important way from that provided by the republicans: for the republicans, moral corruption in the people is, on its own, sufficient to bring about the demise of civil liberty. Michael teaches Adam that corruption is not the *immediate* cause of the loss of civil freedom; it is rather God who punishes peoples who have become corrupt by subjecting them to tyrants. Finally, the poem displays no disposition to agree with Aristotle that a precondition for citizens' enjoyment of civil liberty in any given political society is the existence within that society of a class of slaves and metics who do the manual labour required to provide the necessities of life.

* * *

Though the poem shares some ground with the republicans' complex thinking about civil liberty, it departs from them when it comes to the value and importance of particular civil liberties. This difference derives from the difference between the ways in which Milton and the republicans conceive of the ends of man, and the difference between the ways in which they understand the relationship between government and these ends. As we have seen, the ancients see actions such as participating in government, administering justice, serving in the military, and contemplating as principal means of achieving what, for the human animal, is its

⁴⁶ James Tully, *An Approach to Political Philosophy: Locke in Contexts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 297–98. For further argumentation along these lines, see also Steven Jablonski, "Freely We Serve": *Paradise Lost* and the Paradoxes of Political Liberty', in *Arenas of Conflict: Milton and the Unfettered Mind*, ed. by Kristin Pruitt McColgan and Charles W. Durham (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1997), pp. 107–19; Lim, *John Milton, Radical Politics, and Biblical Republicanism*, pp. 117–25.

end or purpose. Though on occasion granting a priority to some of these activities, Sallust sees many others as either constitutive or means of achieving those ends that humans have. The main reason these republicans are so concerned with civil liberty, where this is understood as the absence of constraints imposed by governments upon members of the political societies they govern, is that they hold that such constraints can prevent them from performing many, if not all, of these actions and so from achieving their ends — be those ends happiness in this world, glory, empire, domination over particular factions in the society, or the peaceful enjoyment of private property. They are preoccupied with what political rulers do, that is, because they believe that political rulers can prevent people from performing those actions which constitute the end and purpose of human existence. And they place great value and importance on civil liberty, where civil liberty is taken to be the absence of constraints placed by governments on the activities of citizens, because this kind of liberty is a precondition for individuals and societies achieving what, for them, is the end and purpose of existence.

Milton, on the other hand, thinks of the ends of human existence (as we know it) in terms of suffering and dying with patience, faith, hope, and charity; worshipping God; and performing other works of faith. What, according to this poem, is the relationship between these activities and rulers of political societies? In his discussion of religious persecution, Michael would seem to claim that government, and other institutions such as the Church, may significantly affect our ability to perform some of these actions, especially worshipping God. Foreseeing the behaviour of the early Church, and clearly deploring it as medieval Christian republicans such as Marsilius of Padua does,⁴⁷ Michael tells Adam,

Then shall they seek to avail themselves of names,
Places and titles, and with these to join
Secular power, though feigning still to act
By spiritual, to themselves appropriating
The Spirit of God, promis'd alike and giv'n
To all Believers; (XII. 515–20).

On the basis of this 'pretense', these Church leaders 'Spiritual Laws by carnal power shall force / On every conscience' (XII. 520–22). Putting it this way, Michael would seem to suggest that those who exert secular power may not just *attempt* to force, but *actually* force people to obey spiritual laws and so prevent people from believing in God as they wish. This is further suggested when he then asks,

⁴⁷ See Marsilius of Padua, *The Defender of the Peace*, ed. and trans. by Annabel Brett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

What will they then
 But force the Spirit of Grace itself, and bind
 His consort Liberty; what, but unbuild
 His living Temples, built by Faith to stand,
 Thir own Faith not another's: (XII. 524–28)

The Spirit of grace *can* be bound, and the inner temple of faith *can* be unbuild by secular power, it would seem. But though in these passages Michael seems to indicate that the holders of secular power — be they Church or government officials — can deny people the freedom of religious belief and worship, and so deny them the freedom to achieve an important part of the purpose of their existence, he then claims,

for on Earth
 Who against Faith and Conscience can be heard
 Infallible? yet many will presume:
 Whence heavy persecution shall arise
 On all who in the worship persevere
 Of Spirit and Truth; the rest, far greater part,
 Will deem in outward Rites and specious forms
 Religion satisfi'd; (XII. 528–35)

Michael here claims that even though secular power may be brought to bear upon faith and conscience, even though faith and conscience are forced by churches and rulers, and even though many will in fact conform with this power at least in outward forms of worship, one *need* not conform. For, in the face of persecution, some will persevere in the worship of spirit and truth. The passage thus concludes on a note more in line with *A Treatise of Civil Power* (1659) where, arguing for limited religious toleration, Milton claims that outward force is *ineffective* as a means of changing belief. And since one can persevere in one's faith and worship, in the face of rulers' attempts to force us to believe and worship God in a particular way, rulers ultimately do not have the power to prevent us from achieving this crucial aspect of our purpose in life. But even if one can persevere in this way, the extended treatment Michael provides to this issue of religious persecution indicates that the freedom from constraints placed by government and Church upon believing and worshipping as one sees fit is a civil liberty of the utmost importance.

In so doing, the poem departs from republican thinking about civil liberty in two important respects. First, the republicans tend to see the activities of believing in deities and worshipping them not as ones through which human beings fulfill the aims and purposes they have by virtue of being humans, but merely as means of cultivating those virtues they and others require in order to perform those other activities (such as administering justice, serving in the military, and ruling) which *are* activities through which humans fulfill these aims and purposes. Because the

republicans tend to see religion in this way, and because they see the primary task of government to promote virtue in citizens, some of them, such as Cicero, endorse a state-controlled religion and a robust policy of religious persecution that is set out in civil law. Granting paramount importance to the freedom of religion and explicitly condemning forms of religious persecution, Milton's poem thus differs in an important way from the discussions of civil liberty in Cicero, Livy, and Machiavelli.

Second, the republicans' endorsement of a state-controlled Church follows from their view that a people's religious belief and practice directly impinge upon their virtue, and that the primary task of government is to make its members virtuous and so at least capable of living the good life. It is because they do not separate politics from morality, and civil law from virtue, that is, that the republicans do not grant to members of political societies the freedom from government to cultivate virtue as they see fit. But this is really what Michael is doing by espousing a theory of religious toleration that is grounded, like the mature Locke's, in the separation of church and state. For, if, as the poem asserts, virtue is grounded in faith and right religion, by taking away from government the job of cultivating faith and right religion, Milton takes away from it the job of cultivating virtue. Were Milton truly committed to the fusion of ethics and politics which is at the heart of republican thought, he would, like other English republicans such as James Harrington and Marchamont Nedham (on occasion),⁴⁸ promote a political society in which government assumes some responsibility for inculcating true religion (by law or education) on grounds that true religion is the foundation of virtue. He would affirm at least *something like* the old Israel under Moses and God, for both 'civil Justice' and 'religious Rites' were governed by civil law in that political society at that time. But Milton renounces that law and in good Pauline fashion relegates it to the status of a sign of human depravity and a promise of the Son. In so doing, he abandons a major republican commitment in favour of a view of civil liberty that is, in its essentials, not republican, but, at least on one common definition of the term, liberal. For, as Tully observes, 'Locke is a liberal in the sense that religion, or morals, and politics are separate and the role of government is to ensure material well-being and individual civil and religious liberty'.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ See Mark Goldie, 'The Civil Religion of James Harrington', in *The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe*, ed. by Anthony Pagden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 197–222; Scott, *Commonwealth Principles*, p. 53; Worden, *Literature and Politics in Cromwellian England*, pp. 249–51, 302.

⁴⁹ Tully, *Approach to Political Philosophy*, p. 305. See also William Walker, 'The Limits of Locke's Toleration', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 332 (1995), 133–54; Walker,

But even the freedom from constraints imposed by government on the activities of believing things about God and worshipping him is ultimately not that important and valuable. For *no* civil freedom enjoyed by any individual can be of much value to anyone in those situations where, having become corrupt and lost our inner freedom, we are, through God's direct and just intervention, subjected to violent lords. Indeed, the loss or denial of civil freedom is, in some situations, valuable and important because it is what we deserve for existing — perhaps as a result of our own permission — in a state of inward slavery. But even more important is the perspective on the value of civil liberty that follows from the poem's view that central to the ends and purposes of fallen man are suffering and dying in a way which qualifies us for a second and better life. By denying us our civil liberties, by persecuting us for our religious beliefs and practices, or indeed, for any other thing, our rulers — be they elected senates, absolute monarchs, or tyrants — cannot prevent us from fulfilling these ends. Indeed, such rulers may even provide the occasion for achieving them, for exercising virtue and achieving 'victory' in life as this poem represents it. For such rulers inflict pain, even death, upon those who persevere in the truth, and, as Adam finally learns from Michael, in the postlapsarian world, 'suffering for Truth's sake / Is fortitude to highest victory, / And to the faithful Death the Gate of Life' (XII. 569–71). That is why, though rulers will, as Adam suspects, 'deal / Worse' with the followers of the Son than they dealt with the Son himself, these followers still do not lose (XII. 483–84). 'Against such cruelties / With inward consolations recompens't, / And oft supported', they will, on the contrary, 'amaze / Thir proudest persecutors' (XII. 494–97). They will 'win / Great numbers of each Nation to receive / With joy the tidings brought from Heav'n' and, their 'race well run', they will achieve victory and attain 'Life' (XII. 502–05).

The point here is not that the poem annihilates the value of civil liberties for fallen mankind — there is an explicit and powerful critique of political societies the members of which do not enjoy particular civil liberties, especially the freedom of religion. The point is that the poem does not place supreme importance upon civil liberties as the republicans do. The reason it does not do so is that, on its view of man, these liberties are not essential to the fulfilment of the ends and purposes of man, as they are for the republicans. While Milton here grants that governments, churches, and other citizens can significantly affect human existence and the pursuit of the ends of man, he ultimately places the fulfilment of these ends beyond their reach, and thereby *diminishes* the importance to each individual of what

his/her rulers and fellow citizens permit and forbid him/her to do. Religious freedom and other civil liberties are nice if you can get them, but not getting them does not necessarily mean you fail as a human being, where failing as a human being means failing to achieve your ends as they are defined by your maker.

* * *

Bent on making the poem a repudiation of monarchy, in part because they are held by the mistaken notion that Milton's political prose, English republicanism, and republican tradition at large are categorically antimonarchical, many critics have claimed that the monarchy in heaven must not be taken as an ideal for postlapsarian human societies. At the same time, these critics wish to see heavenly politics as being exemplary for humans. Thus, while Lewalski claims that 'Milton definitively removes absolute monarchy from earth to heaven, as the only place it rightly belongs', she also claims that heavenly society is not in fact the realm of 'courtly servility' Satan thinks it is, but constitutes an 'ideal' for man since 'it is designed to promote happiness, growth in virtue, and responsible citizenship in all its inhabitants'.⁵⁰ Similarly, while Norbrook claims that 'it is simply invalid to make analogies between heavenly rule and earthly government', he also asks us to see 'Milton's Father and Son' as a version of the 'Machiavellian legislator' whom Milton and the other English republicans saw as a 'model' statesman for the fallen world.⁵¹

This is just trying to have it both ways. As we have suggested, a more consistent approach would be to recognize that, because the heavenly monarchy is consistent with the antiformalist, meritocratic, and Christian principles pronounced by Abdiel, it is at least consistent with what, according to this poem, is an ideal political society for man. Viewed in this way, the heavenly 'state' implies that monarchy *may* be a legitimate and productive form of government for humans in some circumstances, as indeed Milton allows on many occasions in the prose. In addition, as these critics claim, it carries some implications for the kind of liberties members of political societies should have. It suggests that the nature and extent of civil liberty, like the forms of government, should be contingent upon the distribution of merit amongst members of the society, where the grounds for determining merit are reason, nature, and the will of God. In cases where a single person surpasses all others in merit, that person should rule, and others should, as Aristotle claims, joyfully obey and serve. Even then, however, members may legitimately claim the freedom from that person to govern others, or at least to participate with that

⁵⁰ Lewalski, 'Paradise Lost and Milton's Politics', p. 157.

⁵¹ Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic*, pp. 76–77.

single person in the government of others, as the 'Powers' and 'Princes' who sit on thrones in heaven do. For even though a single person may surpass all others in merit, some members of the society may be worthier than others, as is the case in heaven, and they therefore have some claim to rule. In addition, as Lewalski points out, the angels also have freedoms to serve their ruler, to interpret his decrees, to determine how to go about their service, and to serve as soldiers and commanders in the military in this 'complex social order'.⁵² They have these freedoms, even though the law stipulates punishments for those who disobey, because the law of this political society is understood not as a constraint upon an antecedent freedom, but as something that defines and constitutes that freedom.

We have seen that, in the final books of the poem, there are strong indications that members of political societies after the first coming of the Son are delivered from Mosaic law and should enjoy the freedom from both Church and state to read Scripture, to develop their own beliefs about God, to worship God as they see fit, and to perform works which are in accordance with the law of faith engraved on their hearts. In his critique of Nimrod, Michael seems to recommend 'fair equality, fraternal state' (XII. 26). And it seems clear that the poem does not endorse some of the ideals of civil liberty canvassed by Machiavelli when Michael passes over Rome swaying the world and later deplores those days when

Might only shall be admir'd,
And Valor and Heroic Virtue called;
To overcome in Battle, and subdue
Nations, and bring home spoils with infinite
Man-slaughter, (XI. 689–93)

But one would be hard put to derive an ideal of civil liberty in Christian commonwealths from these books, for they are silent concerning other civil liberties, such as the freedom from government-imposed constraints on participating in ruling the political society of which one is a member; the freedom from such constraints to express one's views in speech and print; the freedom from such constraints to administer justice in one's political society; the freedom from such constraints to bear arms; the freedom from such constraints to claim private ownership in goods; the freedom from such constraints to marry and divorce; the freedom from such constraints to participate in the disposal of public property; the freedom from such constraints to change both governors and forms of government. Having endorsed religious freedom and lamented that in many cases it will not exist in political

⁵² Lewalski, 'Paradise Lost and Milton's Politics', p. 157.

societies after the first coming, Michael says nothing of these other civil freedoms with which the republicans are preoccupied. Instead, he briefly describes how the world will groan until the second coming and then expels Adam and Eve from paradise. Delivered to the fallen world which lies all before them, they are, as Michael has informed Adam, free from God and each other to form whatever kind of society they wish. Rather than ending the poem with an assertion of that natural right, Milton concludes with a vision of the freedom ‘to choose / Thir place of rest, and Providence thir guide’ (XII. 646–47).

Why? Why does the poem’s representation of the human condition as Milton knew it — the condition of man between the first and second comings of the Son — display so little concern with those civil liberties? Why is there nothing approaching the articulation of an ideal of civil liberty, as there is in all of the republicans we have considered? Because, from the Protestant perspective the poem aims to justify and inculcate in its readers, enjoying the civil liberties we ought to enjoy is ultimately not essential to our winning in this life. Because, unlike the peoples of old who so inspired Machiavelli and Milton himself on other occasions, Milton on this occasion subscribes to an interpretation of Christianity according to which not ‘worldly glory’ but ‘paradise’ is the goal, and humans thus rightly consider ‘how best to bear, rather than how best to avenge their injuries’ (D 278).

We are thus again brought to a perception of how the relationship between this poem and the political prose is much more complicated than some critics maintain. On the one hand, in dramatizing how one may enjoy civil liberty while under the rule of a monarch, the poem is — contrary to what many Miltonists have recently claimed — consistent with one of the *prevailing* arguments in the regicide tracts. That monarchy is perfectly consistent with civil liberty is clear, for example, in *Eikonoklastes* when Milton asks of Charles I,

Might not he, both as a Man, and as a Christian have raignd within himself, in full sovranty of soule, no man repining, but that his outward and imperious will must invade the civil Liberties of a Nation? Did wee therefore not permit him to use his reason or his conscience, not permitting him to bereave us the use of ours? And might not he have enjoy’d both, as a King, governing us as Free men by what Laws we our selves would be govern’d?⁵³

Reading this passage in the context of the tract, we know that the answer to the final question is ‘yes’, that in fact it is a rhetorical question the meaning of which is that Charles I might very well have ruled Englishmen as ‘freemen’ if he had ruled them in accordance with the civil laws they had established through parliament.

⁵³ *Eikonoklastes*, p. 412.

And that monarchy is consistent with civil liberty in this way is one reason people, according to Milton, appointed kings in the first place:

Kings, who, as all other Officers of the Public, were at first chos'n and install'd onely by consent and suffrage of the People, to govern them as Freemen by Laws of thir own framing, and to be, in consideration of that dignity and riches bestow'd upon them, the entrusted Servants of the Common-wealth, should notwithstanding grow up to that dishonest encroachment, as to esteem themselves Maisters, both of that great trust which they serve, and of the People that betrusted them.⁵⁴

Rather than categorically condemning and rejecting monarchy on grounds that those subject to it are denied civil liberty, Milton in the regicide tracts distinguishes over and over again between monarchy and tyranny, defines the former in terms of the rule of the one that is subject to civil law as established by the will and reason of the people through parliament, and explicitly asserts that it is perfectly consistent with the civil liberty of the people.

On the other hand, whereas in *Paradise Lost* there is little rights talk, in the prose Milton commonly discusses civil liberty in terms of rights that exist by virtue of both natural and civil law. In addition, the prose grants greater importance to civil liberties in relation to human existence than the poem does. Indeed, one of the premises of Milton's fervent presentation of himself, the opponents of Charles I, and the English people at large as defenders of 'Liberty' in *Areopagitica* and the regicide tracts is that civil liberty is of supreme importance to the life of man. But why is civil liberty the greatest cause, and why are those who, like the English parliamentarians and tyrannicides, fight for, defend, and preserve civil liberties in their own countries the greatest heroes the world has ever known? Is civil liberty, according to the prose, something to be sought for its own sake, or for the sake of something else?

Part of the answer is that among the liberties in question is the freedom of religion, and throughout these tracts Milton emphasizes that believing and worshipping as one sees fit are central to the purpose of human existence as it is defined by God. But this is only part of the answer. Another major part of it derives from the way in which Milton invests in ancient Graeco-Roman ideas about the purpose of human existence. Citing Cicero, Sallust, and Livy so heavily throughout the regicide tracts, and assuming the role of glorifier of noble military and political deeds in good Roman fashion, Milton, as we saw in Chapter 1, openly entertains

⁵⁴ *Eikonoklastes*, pp. 85–86. Throughout *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* and the first *Defence*, Milton defines monarchy in terms of the rule of the one that is subject to the law and asserts that monarchy is perfectly consistent with civil liberty.

their understanding of *gloria* — both personal and national — as a significant end of human existence. Civil liberties are supremely valuable because glory is an end of human existence and, as Skinner observes, ‘Milton echoes Sallust’s warning that, in the absence of freedom, there will be no hope of attaining civic glory and greatness’.⁵⁵

But the value of civil liberties in these tracts is also a function of the fact that, as we also saw in Chapter 1, Milton here takes seriously ideas about the end of human existence that are forwarded by Aristotelian political and ethical writings. Thus, throughout *Areopagitica*, Milton writes as though one of the chief ends of human existence is the life of virtue. In order to live the life of virtue, he claims, we need to know both good and evil: ‘the knowledge and survey of vice is in this world’, Milton writes, ‘necessary to the constituting of human virtue, and the scanning of error to the confirmation of truth’. One of the best and safest ways of knowing and surveying vice and scanning error is ‘by reading all manner of tracts and hearing all manner of reason’.⁵⁶ The freedom from government to read, speak, and hear is therefore of great value to humans: it is necessary in order for them to achieve the life of virtue which is at least part of the end of their existence. Similarly, the freedoms to participate in legislation and administer justice are of great value to humans since these activities, too, are presented in these tracts as supremely virtuous activities of wise, just, and prudent men and, so, as dimensions of that happiness which is the end of human existence. In short, Milton in these tracts sees freedoms from government to perform particular actions as being so valuable because he sees those actions as being either necessary or central to the achievement of the ends of man. Should our rulers prevent us from engaging in these activities — and in many cases they can — they would prevent us from living a fulfilling and successful life. Because it repudiates many aspects of the ancient vision of the ends of man which informs the prose, *Paradise Lost* also departs from Milton’s *evaluation* of civil liberty in the prose, with the result that the poem is not another one of his monuments to civil liberty and those who take up arms to secure and maintain it.

⁵⁵ Skinner, ‘John Milton and the Politics of Slavery’, p. 21.

⁵⁶ *Areopagitica*, p. 729.

HISTORY

I am far from compiling a history of our political troubles, which you seem to urge; for they are worthier of silence than of publication. What we need is not one who can compile a history of our troubles but one who can happily end them.

Milton, letter to Henry Oldenburg, 20 December 1659

Republican Tradition

Alasdair MacIntyre claims that ‘every particular view of the virtues is linked to some particular notion of the narrative structure or structures of human life’.¹ Given that a defining feature of republican tradition is a view of the virtues, this tradition might thus be expected to be linked to a particular notion of the narrative structures of human life or, as both they and representations of them are also sometimes called, ‘history’. That this is indeed the case is confirmed by the fact that most of what are commonly taken to be the major texts in this tradition are not works of philosophy or political theory, but works of history and historical commentary. Thus, when Blair Worden ventures to identify the main sources of the ‘English republicanism’ of which Milton is supposedly a proponent, he lists Aristotle’s *Politics*, Polybius’s *Histories*, Plutarch’s *Lives*, Cicero’s writing on justice and government (which contain substantial histories of Rome), Livy’s history of Rome, Tacitus’s history of Rome, ‘the histories of Sallust and Quintilian’, Machiavelli’s commentary on Livy’s history of Rome, and *The Prince*.² If we take this to be the canon of classical and Renaissance republicanism, it is clear that the affirmation of what are thought of as ‘republican principles’ and ‘republican values’ and the implementation of ‘republican language’ or ‘republican discourse’ occur within

¹ MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, p. 174.

² Worden, ‘English Republicanism’, pp. 445–46.

narratives of the lives of individuals and nations. And, as many scholars have observed, it is not the case that the historiography and narrative vocabulary of these texts are one thing, and their republican principles and vocabulary are another. Rather, the narrative vocabulary and modes of historical representation and analysis are constitutive of what we take to be republican thinking and writing. Thus Pocock emphasizes that, even in works of political philosophy such as Aristotle's *Politics*, a vision and understanding of the temporal process by which individuals and political societies, in accordance with their nature, come to be and cease to be is a major component. He observes, moreover, that it was Polybius's *historicized* constitutional thought — his vision of how the three pure constitutions and their perversions succeed each other in time, and how the mixed constitution is a means of forestalling that succession — that was of such decisive influence on later republicans.³ We have, furthermore, seen that the importance of this historical perspective on constitutions is clearly on display in Cicero's *On the Republic* and *On Laws* which are indebted to Polybius's constitutional theory and history of Rome. Perhaps, as Frede observes, this 'conception of *historical development*' which is 'central to Cicero's thinking' more than anything else separates Cicero from Plato in these works.⁴ Moreover, as Nederman observes, the famous narrative of 'the discursive foundations of public life' which Cicero provides in *On Invention* is an essential element of his political theory, one which 'ties the role of the statesman to a clear notion of citizenship and civic intercourse'.⁵

Pocock is just as emphatic on the historiographical component of early modern Florentine republican theory: for the Florentines, 'a vital component of republican theory consisted of ideas about time, about the occurrence of contingent events of which time was the dimension, and about the intelligibility of the sequences [...] of particular happenings that made up what we should call history. It is this which makes it possible to call republican theory an early form of historicism'. Elaborating upon Hans Baron's account of a Florentine 'revolution in historiographical concepts', Pocock also claims that a particular vision of history is that from which early modern republican political discourse (which Pocock also calls 'civic humanism') derives, and that a particular historical problem (which Pocock sometimes calls 'the Machiavellian moment') is that which this discourse was meant to articulate and solve: 'a language for which the term "civic humanism" may appropriately be used

³ Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*.

⁴ Frede, 'Constitution and Citizenship', p. 79.

⁵ Nederman, 'Rhetoric, Reason, and Republic', pp. 251–53.

can be traced, deriving from the assertion of a republican vision of history, and employed for a variety of purposes among which by far the most important was that of asking whether the *vivere civile* and its values could indeed be held stable in time'.⁶ Maurizio Viroli, too, observes this historiographical element of Machiavelli's republicanism, though he sees it deriving primarily from the way in which classical republicans such as Cicero and the Roman rhetoricians endorsed the 'idea that history is not only a source of political wisdom which helps to understand what should be done, but also incites men to do what should be done'.⁷

All of these scholars help us to see that, as Bruce Smith puts it, 'the vocabulary of republican thought is saturated with temporality',⁸ and that particular ways of envisioning, understanding, representing, using, and abusing human history are so deeply embedded in republican texts that they constitute a principal element of what we think of as republican thought. But if, as both MacIntyre and our own consideration of virtue already suggest, ideas of virtue are deeply interrelated with this vision of history, and if, as we have seen, Milton's ideas of virtue differ radically from those of the republicans, we might expect that his vision of history differs from theirs as well. To see that this is indeed the case, we need first to recall how the ancients and Machiavelli think about the importance of the political, social, and military history of Rome and Israel; how they understand the causes of human experience at large; how they envision the overall shape of this experience; and what kind of meaning and value they find in it.

* * *

Though in his *Histories* Polybius aspires to outdo other historians who dealt merely with 'particular wars and certain matters connected with them' by writing a 'general history' and examining 'the general and comprehensive scheme of events', he nevertheless concentrates on Rome (I. 4.3). The reason he felt that he could fulfill his ambition to write 'the general history of the whole world' (*His* XXXIX. 8.6) by writing about Rome was that 'the Romans have subjected to their rule not portions, but nearly the whole of the world' with the result that the history of the world underwent a drastic change (*His* I. 2.7). For whereas before the Second Punic War (218–202) 'the doings of the world had been, so to say, dispersed, as they were held together by no unity of initiative, results, or locality', after this war

⁶ Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, pp. 3, 56, 83.

⁷ Viroli, *Machiavelli*, p. 97.

⁸ Bruce Smith, *Politics and Remembrance: Republican Themes in Machiavelli, Burke, and Tocqueville* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 11. See also Hulliung, *Citizen Machiavelli*, and Scott, *Commonwealth Principles*, pp. 191–209.

began, 'history has been an organic whole, and the affairs of Italy and Libya have been interlinked with those of Greece and Asia, all leading up to one end' (*His* I. 3.3–5). By writing the history of Rome, Polybius felt that he could not only write the history of the world, but also provide statesmen and generals with the kind of instruction that he felt was proper to historical writing. This included instruction to his fellow Greeks concerning how to deal with Rome's ever increasing power over the Peloponnese during the second century, and how to judge whether 'the Roman rule is acceptable or the reverse' (*His* III. 4.7).

It is in part because they share Polybius's sense that, by virtue of its success in defeating and ruling other peoples and nations in Europe, Asia, and Africa, the history of Rome is the history of the world, that Latin historians such as Sallust, Cicero, and Livy also concentrate on Rome.⁹ They also share the Greek's conviction that the most important aspect of Roman history was its military and political dimension. This fact allies them with the ancient epic poets, for as Charles Fornara and others point out, though the Graeco-Roman historians wished to distinguish themselves in some ways from the epic poets who preceded them, they nevertheless shared the poets' view that military and political deeds were most worthy of record, and that they themselves were in part responsible for establishing the fame and glory of those who performed them. But the Latin historians focus on Roman military and political history also simply because they are Roman and Romanocentric, because, as Fornara puts it, 'the Latins viewed the world from within the *pomerium*, Rome's city limits, whether the author was Cato, Sallust, Livy, or Tactius'.¹⁰ In addition, the Latins focus on Rome because they are patriotic, and they see their act of recording the military and political deeds of Rome as an expression of that patriotism. Thus, speaking of the history of Rome which many had requested Cicero to write, Atticus remarks to Cicero in *On Laws*, 'I think you owe this as a duty not only to the enthusiastic people who enjoy your writings but also to your country, which you once saved and now have the chance to glorify' (I. 5). We have already seen how Sallust understands his own efforts to write of Roman history as a significant form of service to his country (*Cat* 3.1, 8.1–5).

⁹ For further references in Polybius to the Roman conquest of 'the whole world', or at least what was known of it, see *His* III. 1.4–5, VI. 2.3, XXXIX. 8.6. For Roman history as universal history or the history of the world, see Lucan, *Civil War*, trans. by Susan H. Braund (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), I. 1–7, 67–69, 160. For Cicero's view of Rome as 'the site and centre of a world empire', see *Rep* II. 10.

¹⁰ Charles William Fornara, *The Nature of History in Ancient Greece and Rome* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), pp. 3, 41. See also Jasper Griffin, *Homer* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 41, and Crawford, *Roman Republic*, p. 14.

This commitment to recording deeds of military prowess and effective statesmanship (including speeches) comprehended more than a commitment to strict descriptions of battles and the content and results of diplomatic meetings. In accordance with the orator Antonius's famous discussion of historical writing in Cicero's *On the Orator* (II. 9.36, II. 12.51–15.65), Cicero, Sallust, and Livy all display a considerable commitment to describing the topographical details of the sites of the events they narrate and how they, as well as men's knowledge or ignorance of them, enter into those events. They all conform in varying degrees with Antonius's view that the historian is properly concerned with the characters of those men, 'outstanding in renown and dignity', who perform the actions they narrate (*Or* II. 15.63–64). They all in varying degrees describe the customs and laws of Rome and some of its allies and enemies. The Latins also of course display a major concern with the decline of the republic at large. Thus, Sallust documents in considerable detail the deterioration of the republic which he sees following upon the annihilation of Carthage in 146 and being greatly accelerated by Sulla's military and political activities. Indeed, at the outset of *The War with Catiline* he claims that what makes that event 'worthy of special notice' is 'the extraordinary nature of the crime and of the danger arising from it' (4.4–5), while at the opening of the *The War with Jugurtha* he claims that what makes its subject worthy of record is that it is a war that 'was [...] long, sanguinary and of varying fortune' but also that 'then for the first time resistance was offered to the insolence of the nobles' and the struggle which ended in the devastation of Italy began (5.1–3). In addition, at the opening of the *The War with Catiline*, Sallust, in light of the corruption of political life in his own day, expresses some reservations concerning the traditional commitment to the worthiness of political life of historical record and speaks as though it is any kind of action involving 'mental excellence' which deserves to be recorded. Livy, too, provides a comprehensive account of how the republic declines, first, from the victory over Veii down to the Gauls' sacking of Rome in 390, and, second (after being refounded by Furius Camillus), from the end of the Second Punic War down to the end of the republic and the rise of Augustus.¹¹ The Latins clearly felt that besides great deeds of force and statesmanship, the deterioration of the republic and the various dangers to which it was exposed were worthy of record, if not glorification.

Polybius, Cicero, Sallust, and Livy all acknowledge supernatural agency in various ways, but their causal analyses of the specific events they take to be worthy of

¹¹ See Luce, *Livy: The Composition of his History*, pp. 230–95; Woodman, *Rhetoric in Classical Historiography*, pp. 128–46; Miles, *Livy: Reconstructing Early Rome*, pp. 76–108.

record are predominantly naturalistic, often militantly so. Thus, while Polybius occasionally sees the rise of Rome to world domination as one of the 'finest and most beneficent of the performances of Fortune [*Tyche*]' (*His* I. 4.4–5), and though characters such as Scipio and Hannibal often remark upon the powers of Fortune, he is strongly committed to identifying natural causes for the principal action of his narrative: the rise of Rome to world domination. In Book VI, he claims that the *anakuklōsis* is or obeys 'a law of nature', and he emphasizes that Rome 'has been formed and has grown naturally, and will undergo a natural decline and change to its contrary' (*His* VI. 9.13–14). In addition, he here attributes Roman success mainly to its mixed constitution and the ways in which it organized its military. Polybius also frequently presents his naturalistic causal analyses of the outcomes of various battles as grounds for praising and blaming the commanders and soldiers that are involved in them. And as Frank Walbank observes, one of the premises of Polybius's general conception of history as something from which statesmen and generals may derive wisdom which will allow them to make accurate predictions and improve their chances of success is that human affairs have been and will continue to be at least in part the result of human choices and actions.¹²

In Book I of *On the Republic*, Scipio reiterates Polybius's account of this natural 'cycle' and then, in Book II, narrates Roman constitutional history as a naturalistic process of 'birth, growth, and maturity' (II. 3). He urges his friends to think of Rome 'developing and moving by a kind of natural process along the road to the best constitution' and is quite emphatic on the point that 'the Roman people became strong, not by chance, but through their own good sense and their firm system of values — though, granted, fortune has not been against them' (*Rep* II. 30). He proceeds to present some of the changes in the Roman constitution, such as that from monarchy to tyranny, as examples of turns in the 'cycle' of forms of government and urges his friends to become 'familiar from the start with its natural movement and circuit; for it is the crowning achievement of political wisdom (and that is what my talk is all about) to divine the course of public affairs, with all its twists and turns' (*Rep* II. 45). The people's arrogation to itself of more legal authority is, moreover, not something brought about by any supernatural agency, but simply 'a development which, in the nature of things, was bound to take place' (*Rep* II. 57).

Similarly, though in the preface to *The War with Catiline* Sallust claims that 'Fortune holds sway everywhere' (8.1), and though in his later *The War with*

¹² See Walbank, *Polybius*, pp. 58–71. For an account which emphasizes the naturalistic side of Polybius's causal explanations of historical events, see also Hahm, 'Polybius' Applied Political Theory'.

Jugurtha he has Sulla remark that 'Fortune has the chief control of human destiny' (102.9), this historian generally provides a naturalistic account of the causes of the events he narrates.¹³ More specifically, he forcefully and consistently explains the causes of the main events in Catiline's conspiracy and the war between the Romans and the Numidians in terms of the characters of men; topography; the virtue and skill of soldiers, generals, and statesmen; passions such as avarice, lust, and ambition; the misuse of language; the conflict between socio-political factions; speeches; bribery; Sulla's actions; hard work; and the discipline of armies. In addition, as we observed in the chapter on human nature, in the preface to the later work, Sallust explicitly affirms mankind's freedom from circumstance, fortune, and chance to live his life, on the condition that the proper, natural relation between mind and body holds within him. But even when humans do not enjoy this kind of freedom, it is not as though a supernatural force comes into play; it is simply that men fall under the control of 'circumstances', which is all that Sallust seems to mean by 'fortune' in some of these passages. And it is because this is how he thinks history works that Sallust chastises those who would evade their responsibility for their failures and shortcomings by blaming them on circumstance, human nature, or fortune.

Finally, P. G. Walsh claims that Livy displays commitments to the Stoic doctrine of 'a universe moving on a predestined course and guided by the Intelligence of the world to a predestined end'.¹⁴ R. M. Ogilvie, T. J. Luce, Charles Fornara, Gary Miles, and others, however, seem more reasonable on this issue, for though over the first decade, he occasionally refers to Fortune and fate, Livy is much more given to providing naturalistic causal analyses of the specific events he narrates. As Ogilvie puts it, 'for Livy, human nature, not divinity, determines the course of human events'.¹⁵ Generally speaking, the references to the powers of fortune, fate, and the gods one finds in Polybius and the Latin historians pale in the face of the

¹³ Note that in asserting the supremacy of Fortune, Sallust seems to think of it not so much as a force that affects the course of events as one that affects how events are recorded, since 'it is she that makes all events famous or obscure according to her caprice rather than in accordance with the truth' (*Cat.* 8.1–2).

¹⁴ P. G. Walsh, *Livy: His Historical Aims and Methods* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), pp. 56, 81.

¹⁵ See R. M. Ogilvie, 'Livy', in *Latin Literature*, vol. II: *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature*, ed. by E. J. Kenney and W. V. Clausen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982–85), p. 460; Luce, *Livy: The Composition of his History*, pp. 230–95; Miles, *Livy: Reconstructing Early Rome*, pp. 98, 131, 221–22; Fornara, *Nature of History in Ancient Greece and Rome*, pp. 81–88; Conte, *Latin Literature*, pp. 372–73.

detailed naturalistic causal analyses which all of them provide. And they insist that, because men are by and large responsible for what happens to them, they are justly praised and/or blamed for it and they may derive knowledge from the past upon which they may act in order to succeed in military and political life.

In Book VI of the *Histories*, Polybius envisions human history essentially as an endless sequence of the formation and development of discrete political communities, their total annihilation by flood, plague, or crop failure, and the reformation and redevelopment of political communities from scratch. Within this big picture, he sees specific political communities undergoing the *anakuklōsis*. These communities undergo the natural progression through a cycle of kingship, tyranny, aristocracy, oligarchy, democracy, ochlocracy unless they manage to establish a form of government which combines kingship, aristocracy, and democracy. This mixed form of government was the form that Lycurgus instituted entirely on his own for Sparta, and which the Romans, in light of their experience over time, also established for themselves. As those two specific cases prove, communities with a mixed form of government may enjoy civil liberty and both constitutional and socio-political stability over long periods of time. Even communities under a mixed form of government will perish, however, for 'every body or state or action has its natural periods first of growth, then of prime, and finally of decay' (*His* VI. 51.4). Polybius does occasionally speak of the Roman empire as a goal or end (*telos*) of sorts, and, seeing it as an 'organic whole', he does find some kind of shape and wholeness in the experience of 'the world' once it comes under Roman rule. But he does not see human experience at large as having any particular origin beyond the formation of discrete political societies in the aftermath of cataclysms, nor does he generally see it having any end in the senses of a termination or a goal — Rome will deteriorate, as all mundane things do, and other political societies will rise and fall in the wake of further cataclysms which 'we must believe will often happen again' (*His* VI. 5.6), *ad infinitum*.¹⁶

Though they do not mention Polybius's postulate of cataclysms which almost wipe out mankind, Cicero, Sallust, and Livy — all of whom relied on Polybius in one way or another — generally write as though human history is an experience that has no particular origin or end and that is in important ways centred on Rome while it remains strong. True, at the opening of *The War with Catiline*, Sallust seems to contemplate a kind of golden age in the distant past, for 'in the beginning kings (for that was the first title of sovereignty among men) took different courses, some training their minds and others their bodies. Even at that time men's lives

¹⁶ For a much more detailed discussion of Polybius's vision of history at large and its precedents, see Trompf, *Idea of Historical Recurrence in Western Thought*, pp. 4–59.

were still free from covetousness; each was quite content with his own possessions' (*Cat* 2.1). But in *The War with Jugurtha*, he seems to think of mankind's distant past in terms of states of barbarism, for 'in the beginning Africa was inhabited by the Gaetulians and Libyans, rude and uncivilized folk, who fed like beasts on the flesh of wild animals and the fruits of the earth. They were governed neither by institutions nor law, nor were they subject to anyone's rule' (*Jug* 18.1–2). There are for Sallust different forms of experience in the distant past, but whatever they may have been, he does not identify any particular origin of mankind and its experience, nor does he betray any sense that it has any particular end, in any sense of that word. Within this ongoing, endless experience, however, some achievements and elements are everlasting: 'notable beauty and great riches, as well as bodily strength and all other gifts of that kind, soon pass away, but the splendid achievements of the intellect, like the soul, are everlasting. In short, the goods of the body and of fortune have an end as well as a beginning, and they all rise and fall, wax and wane; but the mind, incorruptible, eternal, ruler of mankind, animates and controls all things, yet is itself not controlled' (*Jug* 2.1–4).

At the opening of his history of Rome, Livy entertains the legendary accounts of the origins of Rome, and he sometimes thinks of the past as being better than the present; he does not, however, entertain any postulates concerning the origins of man and history at large, nor does he suggest that the whole of human experience will be brought to any particular conclusion or fulfilment. Like Polybius and the other Romans, he conceives of history essentially as the ongoing military and political experience of particular peoples in particular places, but he might reasonably be seen as an exception to Fornara's claim that 'the Romans operated on the assumption of continuity, an open-ended, linear (though not progressive) view of history'.¹⁷ For he also observes forms of recurrence in the experience of the people that preoccupies him. As Miles observes, 'while Livy describes explicitly one sequence of foundation, decline, and refoundation from Romulus to Camillus, so he holds out implicitly the prospect of a second sequence from the refoundation by Camillus through the decline of the late Republic described in the preface to a possible new refoundation by Augustus'.¹⁸ Thinking of the experience of the Romans in this way, Livy departs from the Polybian thesis of the degeneration of all organisms and institutions and refrains from providing any solid reasons for believing that

¹⁷ Fornara, *Nature of History in Ancient Greece and Rome*, p. 73.

¹⁸ Miles, *Livy: Reconstructing Early Rome*, p. 94; see also Luce, *Livy: The Composition of his History*, pp. 290–95.

Rome must fall. Livy does on occasion suggest that a dominant Rome is an end in the sense of being in accordance with Fortune or the will of the gods, but insofar as he presents human experience as being a function of naturalistic forces — and such a presentation prevails — Roman domination emerges as a contingent affair which might or might not continue and which, regardless of what happened, could claim no standing as the culmination of human life on earth. All of this, however, does not really amount to a cyclical theory of human experience: Livy seems rather generally to conform with an open-ended, linear conception of history, but he sees certain situations which are analogous to others, perhaps at regular intervals, occurring along that endless line.

The value of the past for Polybius and the Romans derives from the way it can provide knowledge and wisdom which men may use to succeed in political and military life. It also derives from the potential of the past to provide *examples* of efficacious and virtuous behaviour (mainly in the political and military realms) which can move and inspire us to imitate that behaviour. Thus, Polybius claims to make his remarks on the Romans and Carthaginians in the Second Punic War ‘for the sake of the leaders of both these states, and of all, no matter where, who shall be charged with the conduct of public affairs, so that by memory or actual sight of such actions as these, they be moved to emulation’ (*His* IX. 9.8–9). He thus objects to historians dwelling on sensational and abnormal events because they ‘arouse no emulation’ (*His* XV. 36.3). Sallust, at the opening of *The War with Jugurtha*, allies himself with those Romans who felt that ‘it is the memory of great deeds that kindles in the breasts of noble men this flame that cannot be quelled until they by their own prowess have equalled the fame and glory of their forefathers’ (4.6) (but he also observes that this is no longer the case in ‘these degenerate days’ (4.7)). Livy, in the preface to his work, claims that, being a historian, he presents ‘the lessons of every kind of experience [...] as on a conspicuous monument; from these you may choose for yourself and for your own state what to imitate, from these mark for avoidance what is shameful in the conception and shameful in the result’. But he adds that ‘no state was ever greater, none more righteous or richer in good examples’ than Rome (*Liv* I. pref.10–11).¹⁹ Though Polybius at one point asserts that the aims of tragedy are the opposite of those of history (*His* II. 56), and though the Latins generally abide by that distinction, it is nevertheless clear, as many have observed, that Polybius and the Latins also derive the pleasures of emotional and aesthetic experience from contemplating the spectacles and organic wholes of the

¹⁹ For the importance of *exempla* to Roman historical writing, see Wiedemann, ‘Reflections of Roman Political Thought in Latin Historical Writing’.

past and occasionally provide those pleasures to their readers in their narrative representations of it.²⁰

These generalizations do, however, require some qualification. Sallust and Livy are much less explicitly didactic than Polybius is in the *Histories* and than Cicero is in the *On the Republic*, where Scipio's narration of the constitutional history of Rome serves his teaching on the best form of government and how to administer political societies in general. Livy very infrequently infers general maxims or propositions from the events he describes and, as he says in the preface, he generally leaves it up to the reader to select examples of virtuous behaviour to be emulated. In addition, as Miles observes, over the course of his narrative it becomes clear that Livy regards the past, and interpretations of it such as his own, as being valuable in the sense that they are the source of the Romans' sense of themselves, of their identity, and of their patriotism.²¹ Sallust, too, seldom presents general propositions which might be useful to military commanders and statesmen of the future (though one might easily infer them from what he describes), and he sometimes seems less concerned with counselling and teaching others on the basis of the actions he observes than he is with simply lamenting over and venting his disgust at the state of Rome: at the opening of *The War with Jugurtha*, he confesses he has been 'giving expression to my sorrow and indignation at the morals of our country' (4.9), and those passions certainly animate the later digression on factionalism in the late republic and the preface to *The War with Catiline*. It should also be noted that in his great speech to the plebeians, the 'new man' Marius — with whom Sallust obviously has considerable sympathy — aligns the understanding of the past, and records of it, as a source of wisdom and virtue with the corrupt nobility of Rome: he openly displays his contempt for those 'preposterous creatures' who, once elected to consul, cannot rely on firsthand military and political experience as he himself does but 'read the history of our forefathers and the military treatises of the Greeks' in order to determine what to do (*Jug* 85.11–12). He ferociously attacks those nobles who, dwelling on the virtue of their ancestors, imagine they have it themselves. As an exemplar of the 'new nobility' (*Jug* 85.25), Marius still claims to 'emulate the men of old' (*Jug* 85.37), but he takes great exception to the view that the corrupt nobles

²⁰ For Polybius's assertion of pleasure as one of the things we can get from studying the past and accounts of the past, see *Hist* XV. 36.1–11. Viroli observes the importance the Romans ascribed to the pleasure we derive from studying history (*Machiavelli*, pp. 98–99), and Walsh observes that Livy to some extent invested in Greek 'rhetorical history', which aimed at providing particular pleasures to the reader (*Livy*, Chapter 2).

²¹ Miles, *Livy: Reconstructing Early Rome*, p. 74.

are either competent or virtuous simply because they have, or turn to, glorious ancestors. Indeed, he asserts that ‘the glory of ancestors is, as it were, a light shining upon their posterity, suffering neither their virtues nor their faults to be hidden’ (*Jug* 85.23). Cicero, finally, recommending that the orator be well studied in history and observing at length how historical material is effectively wielded to persuade in a variety of circumstances, makes very clear that the past is of extraordinary value to all those — statesmen, jurists, poets, historians, commanders, orators — who wish to achieve eloquence and persuasive power. As he puts it in *On Duties*, ‘Marathon, Salamis, Plataea, Thermopylae, Leuctra have become battlefields for orators’ (I. 61; see also *Or I*. 18, I. 201).²²

* * *

In the preface to the *Discourses*, Machiavelli laments that men now shun ‘what history has to say about the highly virtuous actions performed by ancient kingdoms and republics, by their kings, their generals, their citizens, their legislators, and by others who have gone to the trouble of serving their country’ (98). It is in part to get men out of this wrong way of thinking about history and to allow them ‘more easily [to] draw those practical lessons which one should seek to obtain from the study of history’ that Machiavelli claims to present a commentary on Livy which contains ‘what I have arrived at by comparing ancient with modern events’ (*D* 99). Over the course of the work, Machiavelli does indeed comment on the history of several ancient kingdoms and republics, such as Israel, Sparta, and Athens, and he compares the important events in these nations with what for him was the modern history of Florence, Venice, and other western European countries. But in some cases, such as ancient Israel, Machiavelli’s comments amount to no more than citations of further instances or examples of things evident elsewhere (*D* 102, 133, 166, 176, 296, 486), and in all cases, his treatment of events in these ancient and modern states is cursory compared to the treatment he lavishes on the history of one ancient political society in particular — Rome. One of the many reasons he does this is that he shares the classical historians’ sense that, mainly by virtue of its success in defeating and ruling other nations in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Middle-East, the history of Rome is the history of the world.

As we observed in Chapter 1, Machiavelli sometimes *justifies* his claims about human nature by way of observing historical events. At the same time, he commonly *relies* on his vision of human nature and his account of the nature or character of particular individuals in order to explain the causes of human experience over

²² For confirmation of this point, see T. P. Wiseman, *Clio’s Cosmetics* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1979), pp. 27–40.

time: it is, in part, because men have general and particular natures, and because 'it is impossible to go against what nature inclines us to' (*D* 431; see also 430), that things happen as they do. Thus, for example, it is because 'envy is inherent in man's nature' that it is dangerous to discover new things (*D* 97), and it is because 'men have, and always have had, the same passions' that 'it necessarily comes about that the same effects are produced' (*D* 517; see also 181, 463). In addition, Machiavelli often points to specific actions, strategies, policies, and procedures when he is explaining the causes of other specific events. Taking issue with Livy's view that the quarrelling between the nobles and plebs was a bad thing, for example, Machiavelli claims that it was the 'primary cause of Rome's retaining her freedom'. For, as Machiavelli explains in one of the naturalistic causal chains he frequently constructs, 'good examples proceed from good education, good education from good laws, and good laws in this case from those very tumults which many so inconsiderately condemn' (*D* 113–14). Proceeding to identify some of the other 'excellent causes' of Rome's 'excellent results' in Book II (*D* 115), Machiavelli discusses public indictments, the virtue of the founding kings, religious ceremonies, specific aspects of its constitution such as the provision for temporary dictatorships, and, of course, military training and discipline. Reaffirming Polybius's views on the importance of Rome's political constitution, Machiavelli summarizes his account of the causes of Roman success in the opening chapter of this book when he responds to Livy and Plutarch who, according to him, claim that 'the Roman people was indebted for the empire it acquired rather to fortune than to virtue':

With this view I cannot by any means agree, nor do I think it can be upheld. For if there is nowhere to be found a republic so successful as was Rome, this is because there is nowhere to be found a republic so constituted as to be able to make the conquests Rome made. For it was the virtue of her armies that caused Rome to acquire an empire, and it was her constitutional procedure and the peculiar customs which she owed to her first legislator that enabled her to maintain what she had acquired. (*D* 270)

Machiavelli elaborates upon his naturalistic explanation of Rome's success in his famous discussion at the opening of Book III of how, because all things deteriorate over time, 'composite bodies, such as are states and religious institutions' need to be 'renovated' (reduced to their original principles) in order to be 'conserved' (*D* 385). He then considers 'how much the action of particular men contributed to the greatness of Rome and produced in that city so many beneficial results' (*D* 390). When he comes in this book to discuss the downfall of Rome, Machiavelli continues to provide a naturalistic causal explanation. Recalling his discussion of the Agrarian law in Book I (but departing from his assertion in *The Prince* that the downfall of Rome was caused mainly by its reliance on mercenaries), he writes near

the end of the work, 'a careful study of the procedure of the Roman republic will show that two causes contributed to the dissolution of that republic. The first was the disputes which arose concerning the Agrarian law. The second was the prolongation of military commands' (D 473). It is, moreover, this kind of naturalistic analysis which *prevails* in Machiavelli's account of the causes of several other aspects of human experience, such as the rise of tyranny, the difference between the ancients and the moderns, war, success and failure in war, the loss of kingdoms, and the failure and success of conspiracies.²³

This is not to say that Machiavelli does not also grant considerable power to what he refers to as 'fortune' (*fortuna*). 'I by no means deny that fortune and military organization had a good deal to do with Rome's empire' (D 371). He then explains how 'Fortune arranges' things 'quite nicely' (D 371) and concludes by asserting 'once again as a truth to which history as a whole bears witness that men may second their fortune, but cannot oppose it; that they may weave its warp, but cannot break it' (D 372). There is, in addition, the famous remark in *The Prince* that 'fortune is the arbiter of half the things we do, leaving the other half or so to be controlled by ourselves' (79). But it would be going too far too say, as Pocock does, that the republican scheme of history continued in Machiavelli to be '*fortuna-dominated*'.²⁴ For, as we have seen, though Machiavelli may concur with Livy on the sacking of Rome by the Gauls in 390, he provides a thoroughly naturalistic account of the long-term corruption of Rome, and he explicitly takes issue with Livy's attribution of Roman success to the goddess Fortune. This is in part because, in general, all individuals and institutions which have virtue are not subject to fortune. Considering Camillus near the end of the work, for example, Machiavelli observes, 'fortune holds no sway' over great men (D 488), and in connection with Rome, he claims that 'good cities depend on their own virtue, not fortune' (D 492; see also *Pr* 46). But even in cases 'where men have but little virtue', and fortune therefore 'makes a great display of its power' (D 376), Machiavelli does not usually see any supernatural agency dictating what happens; rather, he demonstrates how the lack of virtue on its own results in the failures, mistakes, and disasters he calls 'misfortune' and 'bad fortune'. Thus, for example, he does not claim that because modern republics such as Venice and Florence lack virtue, their history has been dominated by a supernatural agent; rather, he argues that that lack of virtue itself is the main cause of the misfortune and defeat suffered by these modern republics.

²³ For confirmation of this point, see Hulliung, *Citizen Machiavelli*, p. 159.

²⁴ Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, p. 218.

Moreover, in some of his causal chains, Machiavelli makes what he calls 'fortune' itself the effect of other natural causes, and so implicitly denies it the status of some kind of independent supernatural agent that directly affects the course of human affairs. On these occasions, fortune appears to be simply a kind of luck or worldly experience which can be either bad or good (as it often does in *The Prince*).²⁵ Thus, though he concedes that fortune had a hand in Rome's success, Machiavelli also clearly suggests that this fortune is really the product of good military order: 'where military organization is good there must needs be good order, and [...] rarely does it happen that good fortune does not also accompany it' (*D* 113). Here Machiavelli follows Livy who, for example, in describing the Roman campaign against Veii led by Furius Camillus, claims that 'all his measures, being executed with consummate skill and prudence, were attended, as generally happens, with good fortune' (*Liv* V. 19.8). And speaking of early Rome, Machiavelli claims that 'the religion introduced by Numa was among the primary causes of Rome's success, for this entailed good institutions; good institutions led to good fortune; and from good fortune arose the happy results of undertakings' (*D* 141). This identification of fortune simply as luck or experience which is itself the effect of other worldly causes is again explicit when Machiavelli, considering 'the cause of this [Rome's] fortune', argues that 'the fortune which Rome had in these matters, all rulers would have who should emulate Roman methods and should be imbued with the same virtue' (*D* 272), and then shows 'how much more virtue helped the Romans to acquire their empire than did fortune' (*D* 274). And rather than identifying the cause of the failures to which he refers as 'misfortunes' as the supernatural agent, Fortune, Machiavelli at one point simply identifies it as the 'peculiar malady' which is 'inherent in everything' (*D* 438). Finally, as Rubinstein and others have noted, there is in the *Discourses* an emphasis on how the conformity of men's characters to their times and circumstances enters into the causes of their fortune.²⁶ In light of this treatment of fortune, and his relentless account of how tumults, the virtue of founders, the virtue of commanders, education, the simple virtue of one man alone, customs, human nature, laws, and the 'heavens'²⁷ cause

²⁵ See Price's note on *fortuna*, in *The Prince*, pp. 104–06.

²⁶ Rubinstein, 'Italian Political Thought, 1450–1530', p. 55.

²⁷ Anthony Parel, *Machiavellian Cosmos*, emphasizes Machiavelli's ascription of causal power to the heavens (the planets and the spheres in which they moved). But Parel's case for the importance of this 'astrological naturalism' is greatly overstated, since when he explains the causes of historical events in *The Prince* and the *Discourses*, Machiavelli never refers to those things which would surely figure in a vision of history grounded in an astrological world-view: particular planets, maleficent and beneficent planets, the conjunctions and alignments of planets, and 'chronocrateries'.

specific historical events, it must be said that Machiavelli's conception of the causes of human experience is predominantly naturalistic. He may thus reasonably be seen to follow Polybius, Cicero, and Sallust, for while all of these figures acknowledge a supernatural power of fortune in various ways, their causal analyses of the major aspects of the Roman experience that interest them are predominantly naturalistic, with Roman virtue, exceptional individuals, and the republican constitution occupying major causal roles. Besides aligning him with the classical historians, this naturalistic outlook also aligns Machiavelli with the Renaissance humanists.²⁸

* * *

Over the course of the *Discourses*, Machiavelli provides several broader visions of the particular sequences of causally related events he describes in such detail. Thus, drawing heavily on Polybius's account of *anakuklōsis*, early in the *Discourses* he describes how 'in the beginning of the world, when its inhabitants were few' men lived like beasts, but then proceeded to form a society the government of which was monarchical. When this monarchy degenerated into a tyranny, men established an aristocracy which then degenerated into an oligarchy which was so sickening to the masses that they worked to replace it by a democracy which degenerated into anarchy, the solution to which was the reestablishment of monarchy. But though Machiavelli presents this account of the cycles of government as part of the actual history of early mankind, he concludes by claiming that this 'is the cycle through which all commonwealths pass' (*D* 109) and would continue endlessly to pass, were it not for the fact that states which undergo so much 'commotion' are commonly conquered by more stable states. The actual experience of the first society in the distant past, then, is in important respects the paradigm for the history of all nations, and the history of the world is at this early point in the *Discourses* envisioned as the experience of particular nations endlessly progressing through the three 'good' and the three 'bad' forms of government, unless they are conquered by another

²⁸ See Felix Gilbert, *Machiavelli and Guicciardini* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), p. 218; Peter Bondanella, *Machiavelli and the Art of Renaissance History* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1973), pp. 22–24; Janet Coleman, 'Machiavelli's *via moderna*: Medieval and Renaissance Attitudes to History', in *Niccolo Machiavelli's 'The Prince': New Interdisciplinary Essays*, ed. by Martin Coyle (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), pp. 40–64; James Hankins, 'Humanism and Modern Political Thought', in *Renaissance Humanism*, ed. by Jill Kraye (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 118–41 (p. 123). But for secular medieval approaches to ancient Roman history, ones which qualify these scholars' differentiation between medieval and Renaissance thought and align medieval political thought with Renaissance civic humanism as defined by Baron, see also Blythe, "Civic Humanism" and Medieval Political Thought', pp. 35–53.

nation, or unless they establish a mixed form of government. As we have seen, because Machiavelli sees this form of government as being free from the defects of each good form, it can remain stable over long periods of time, as Sparta did and as Rome did once it had established government by consul, senator, and tribune.

In the opening chapter of Book III, Machiavelli continues to envision history essentially in terms of the endless transformations of different institutions and communities — what he here calls ‘composite bodies’ — but identifies another pattern that these particular transformations can take:

It is a well-established fact that the life of all mundane things is of finite duration. But things which complete the whole of the course appointed them by heaven are in general those whose bodies do not disintegrate, but maintain themselves in orderly fashion so that if there is no change; or, if there be change, it tends rather to their conservation than to their destruction. Here I am concerned with composite bodies, such as are states and religious institutions, and in their regard I affirm that those changes make for their conservation which lead them back to their origins. Hence those are better constituted and have a longer life whose institutions make frequent renovations possible, or which are brought to such a renovation by some event which has nothing to do with their constitution. For it is clearer than daylight that, without renovation, these bodies do not last. (*D* 385)

Rather than envisioning discrete communities whose endless movement through six forms of government is interrupted only by invasion or the establishment of a mixed constitution, Machiavelli here envisions them (whatever form they may have) as beginning in a state of order or goodness and then disintegrating, becoming corrupt, being destroyed, and dying. But just as Machiavelli qualifies his assertion that all communities must proceed endlessly through six forms of government by affirming the mixed form of government as a form that can resist and at least in principle arrest this progress, so he here affirms renovation as that by which the slide of ‘religious institutions, republics and kingdoms’ (*D* 386) from originary goodness to corruption and death may be resisted and even reversed. By ‘renovation’, Machiavelli means a ‘reduction’ to a body’s ‘starting-point’, a ‘return to its original principles’ (*D* 386), a kind of reaffirmation and reinvigorated enforcement of its original principles which has the effect of reminding its members of those principles, making the members respect them, and making the members live in accordance with them. In short, renovation is that which brings ‘men back to the mark’ (*D* 387). Such renovations may be brought about by a force external to the institution — as the Gauls brought about renovation in Rome by sacking it — or by events or individuals within it, such as the introduction of a good law or institution, or ‘some good man who arises in their midst and by his example and his virtuous deeds produces the same effect as does the constitution’ (*D* 387). Thus, Rome was renovated by the introduction of institutions such as the plebeian tribunate and

the censorship, and by virtuous men such as Horatius Cocles, Scaevola, Fabricius, the two Decci, and Regulus Attilius. The Christian religion was 'restored to its starting point' by St Francis and St Dominic, for 'by their poverty and by their exemplification of the life of Christ [they] revived religion in the minds of men in whom it was already dead' (*D* 389). In this opening chapter of Book III, then, Machiavelli continues to think of history essentially in terms of 'composite bodies' or 'communities' (*D* 390) such as churches and states which, as mundane things, change over time. However, instead of envisioning this change, in the case of states, as an endless progression through forms of government (but one which can be altered by way of foreign invasion and resisted through mixed government), he here envisions it as a simpler progression from goodness to corruption and death (but one which can be altered by way of 'renovation').

These descriptions of history in terms of discrete political societies naturally progressing through various institutional forms and resisting with varying degrees of success natural processes of deterioration through renovation are perhaps consistent with Machiavelli's broader speculations on these matters at the opening of Book II. Objecting to men who idealize the past (since the past can neither harm them nor give them cause for envy), Machiavelli asserts that

the world has always been in the same condition, and that in it there has been just as much good as there is evil, but [...] this evil and this good have varied from province to province. This may be seen from the knowledge we have of ancient kingdoms, in which the balance of good and evil changed from one to the other owing to changes in their customs, whereas the world as a whole, remained the same. (*D* 266–67)

The 'world's virtue' had its 'first home' in Assyria, Machiavelli explains, and then progressed to and was 'centred' in Medea, Persia, and Rome, before becoming more dispersed and existing (without being centred) in various kingdoms, such as that of the Saracens, the 'kingdom of the Franks; the kingdom of the Turks, that of the Sultan; and today all the peoples of Germany' (*D* 267). Thus, though in relation to some nations the past may be more virtuous than the present, in relation to the world as a whole, the present is as virtuous as the past, for the world as a whole has not been becoming more and more malignant, but 'has always been in the same condition' (*D* 268). And it is in part because the world, including mankind, remains in the same condition, that the experience of mankind remains in an important sense the same also.

This general vision of history as a kind of homeostatic system within which the amounts of good and evil remain the same but are simply distributed differently as composite bodies are founded and undergo various transformations is, however, challenged by a cyclical vision of another kind. Perhaps recalling Polybius's account

of how 'owing to floods, famines, failure of crops or other such causes there occurs such a destruction of the human race as tradition tells us has more than once happened, and as we must believe will often happen again' (*His* VI. 5.4–6), Machiavelli observes that sometimes pestilence, famine, and flood obliterate the records of the past. Although he categorizes these events as 'causes due to heaven', he proceeds to explain them as purely naturalistic events:

for as in the case of simple bodies, when nature has accumulated too much superfluous material, it frequently acts in the same way and by means of a purge restores health to the body. Similarly in the case of that body which comprises a mixture of human races, when every province is replete with inhabitants who can neither obtain a livelihood nor move elsewhere since all other places are occupied and full up, and when the craftiness and malignity of man has gone as far as it can go, the world must needs be purged in one of these three ways, so that mankind, being reduced to comparatively few and humbled by adversity, may adopt a more appropriate form of life and grow better. (*D* 290)

Though Machiavelli first speaks of pestilence, famine, and flood reducing the inhabitants to a few only 'in certain parts of the world' (*D* 289), he here appears to postulate a much broader cyclical vision of world history, one in which all men of all nations constitute a single body which starts off in a state of health but becomes increasingly malignant, regardless, it seems, of what forms of government are in place and whether or not they are renovated. This body is then 'purged', not by means of a supernatural agency, but simply in accordance with nature, and reconstituted as a healthy body that, though able to 'grow better', again becomes more and more malignant over a long period of time until it is once again purged through destruction.

This general vision of the world at large not as a system within which the amounts of vice and virtue remain the same but as a composite body which endlessly undergoes long periods of deterioration terminated by cataclysmic purgations and renewals is consistent in important respects with the way in which Machiavelli over the course of the work deals with the theme of the ancients and the moderns. For the world would seem to have changed significantly if, as Machiavelli observes in his preface, 'of the virtue of bygone days there remains no trace' and the religion of today has brought not just particular nations but 'the world' to a 'weak state' (*D* 98). And things appear to be worse than they were if, as a result of differences between ancient and modern (Christian) religion, but also of the very success of the Romans in conquering other republics, 'the peoples of old were more fond of liberty than they are today', and the world is 'weak' and has been 'handed [...] over as a prey to the wicked' (*D* 278). It would seem, moreover, that the modern world must in some essential sense be diminished if the modern age is a 'corrupt age' (*D*

334), if 'our times' are in general 'unhappy' compared with the old days (*D* 334), if 'the way in which important matters are dealt with today does not come up to the standard of the ancients' (*D* 433), and if men are 'so feeble' today 'owing to their defective education and to the little knowledge they have of affairs' (*D* 479). By harping on the theme of the virtue of the ancients and the vice of the moderns, and by being so reserved in discussing modern virtue, which seems to exist only in the German republics, Machiavelli brings considerable pressure to bear upon his homeostatic vision of history and conforms with aspects of his vision of mankind as a single body that becomes increasingly corrupt over long periods of time and is then purified in a moment of destruction, ad infinitum.

This is not, however, to say that Machiavelli betrays any significant sense of imminent global cataclysm in *The Prince* or the *Discourses*. For though he does show a strong inclination to think of the transition from the ancient to the modern world as one of decline and corruption, though 'the virtue which then prevailed and the vices which are prevalent today' are to him 'as clear as the sun' (*D* 268), nowhere in *The Prince* or the *Discourses* does he indicate or suggest that his corrupt modern world is about to be purged by deluge, flood, or pestilence. Nor, it is important to add, are there any traces whatsoever in these texts of an imminent cataclysm of the *apocalyptic* kind, the kind that is described in Revelation and that is central to Christian visions of the pattern of history. Surely *some* kind of acknowledgement of the apocalypse, imminent or otherwise, would feature in these texts were they the product of Machiavelli's 'belief in the Christian deity as the providential source of the patterns which 'fortune' weaves'.²⁹ Eschewing the implication of his own historical conceivings that some kind of cataclysm is imminent, and displaying no allegiances to millenarian versions of the revival of virtue in men on earth, Machiavelli rather indicates that the way back to virtue for the moderns in general will be mainly through human endeavours, such as studying history and acting in accordance with its lessons. As Viroli puts it, Machiavelli 'pursues a two-fold effort of redemption: the redemption from the wrong way of reading history and the redemption from corrupt ways of ordering political and military institutions and social life, which are in part the consequence of the wrong way of appreciating history'.³⁰

That history — whatever its overall shape — holds the potential to 'redeem' us, where that would mean the reconstitution of virtue in modern republics such as Florence, derives, first, from the way it can furnish us with *knowledge* about what

²⁹ Nederman, 'Amazing Grace', p. 629.

³⁰ Viroli, *Machiavelli*, p. 99.

we are and the world in which we exist. Over the course of *The Prince* and the *Discourses*, Machiavelli presents particular political and military events in the ancient and modern world as 'examples', 'cases', and 'instances' which 'prove', 'show', 'indicate', 'verify', 'teach', 'illustrate', 'bear witness to', and 'bear out' various propositions about politics and war. Thus, numerous examples, including that of Coriolanus, show the importance of having 'a legal outlet for the anger which the general public has conceived against a particular citizen' (*D* 124–25); 'numerous examples' from ancient times show that it is difficult for a people accustomed to live under a prince to preserve their liberty should they by some accident acquire it (*D* 153); 'history shows again and again' that not gold but good soldiers are the sinews of war (*D* 303); several ancient and modern instances and examples show that infantry is superior to cavalry (*D* 328–33); ancient and modern 'examples' show 'the disorders that a plurality of commanders causes in a war' (*D* 449). By studying the examples provided by history, as Machiavelli both claims to do and hopes to teach others to do, that is, we can learn truths about man and his world. As Viroli puts it, 'like Roman rhetoricians and Florentine historians, Machiavelli believes that history is the basis of political wisdom'³¹ where this wisdom is essentially knowledge about man and the socio-political and military dimensions of his world.

By coming into this wisdom, we will also be able to establish or derive 'practical lessons' (*D* 99), 'principles' (*D* 158), and 'rules' (*Pr* 11, 13, 49, 69, 77, 78) which will enable us to be successful in pursuing our goals. On the basis of what we come to know by way of studying history, and of the various principles of action we formulate in light of that knowledge, that is, we will be able to *act* in the present more effectively and to avoid the 'errors', 'mistakes', and 'blunders' that are inevitably and repeatedly committed by those who do not know these things and that constitute the bulk of those military and political events Machiavelli thinks of as history. As we should learn and act in accordance with 'what history teaches about infantry', so we 'should give credit to, and profit by, all other ancient practices. Were this done, republics and princes would make fewer mistakes', and would 'know' and 'realize', how to handle a body politic, how to make a republic great, how to acquire an empire, and how to make a republic endure (*D* 335). As a source of evidence for propositions about the human condition, history is thus valuable not only to those who seek knowledge upon which they can draw in order to succeed in their designs, but also to those, such as Machiavelli, who seek to gain authority for the counsel and advice they offer to others.

³¹ Viroli, *Machiavelli*, p. 98. For observations on how Machiavelli presents examples as evidence for his claims, see also Bondanella, *Machiavelli and the Art of Renaissance History*, p. 70.

Besides being valuable as a storehouse of examples in the sense of evidence for propositions which we can know and use to succeed and which we can cite to justify the advice we give to others, the past is valuable for Machiavelli (as it was for the Graeco-Roman historians and rhetoricians) as a storehouse of examples in the sense of forms of noble action which can move us to imitate them.³² Thus, in *The Prince*, Machiavelli sees reading history as an essential element of the 'intellectual training' of all princes, in part because this will allow them to 'do what eminent men have done before him: taken as their model some historical figure who has been praised and honoured; and always kept his deeds and actions before them' (48–49; see also 17–18, 26, 83–84). And throughout the *Discourses*, Machiavelli presents various actions and men as exemplars and models to be 'imitated', 'followed', and 'emulated'. After lamenting in the preface that the moderns do not imitate the virtuous actions described in historical writing, for example, he observes how in ancient Rome there were 'such striking examples of virtue' (*D* 114) and later observes that, in light of the history of the Roman emperors, 'every human being will be afraid to imitate the bad times, and will be imbued with an ardent desire to emulate the good' (*D* 138). He later observes that 'the way the Romans behaved is there for all to see, and their example can be followed' (*D* 338; see also 268, 396, 410, 504, 522, 524). It may, however, take a good historian, rhetorician, or commentator, such as Machiavelli, to make these examples inspiring, and, as Machiavelli indicates in his discussion of renovation, the power of real virtuous examples, let alone described ones, to inspire and move citizens seems to be short-lived (*D* 388).

Valuing history in these ways, Machiavelli clearly follows earlier republicans in important ways, but, as usual, he departs from them as well. First of all, in dismissing pleasure as one of the grounds of the value of history, Machiavelli departs from Polybius and other Roman historians and Renaissance humanists. Secondly, whereas the ancients tend to emphasize that history is valuable for showing what ends are good for man and what they should desire, Machiavelli often presents and comments on the past as something that is valuable for indicating merely what men should do *if* they value and desire particular things. Thus, in *The Prince* Machiavelli's counsel frequently takes the form of neither a simple *imperative* nor a simple 'ought' claim that moves out of a premise about what is good for man or princes, but a sentence of the form, 'if you want to maintain your rule, then do such-and-

³² See Gilbert, *Machiavelli and Guicciardini*, pp. 203–35; Viroli, *Machiavelli*, pp. 97–98; Hulliung, *Citizen Machiavelli*, pp. 151–67 (though Hulliung also observes ways in which Machiavelli differs from the ancients).

such'. The conditional mode is also conspicuous in the *Discourses*: reiterating Polybius (*His* VI. 50), Machiavelli counsels that if you want your republic to expand, you should imitate Rome, but if you want it to be confined 'to narrow limits', then take Sparta as your model (*D* 122); if your intention is to govern a state not in your own interests but in the interests of the common good, then contrive to be alone in your authority (*D* 132); 'should a good prince seek worldly renown, he should most certainly covet possession of a city that has become corrupt' (*D* 138); if princes and republics desire to remain free from corruption, they should maintain incorrupt the religious ceremonies (*D* 142); 'if, then, a prince wants to make sure of a populace that might be hostile to him', he needs to know that they want vengeance and freedom and to act accordingly (*D* 155); if, like the Roman people, you want to maintain the freedom of a republic, do not appoint magistrates without guardians (such as the Decemviri), but if, like Appius, you want to set up and maintain a tyranny, ally yourself with the populace and persecute its enemy (the nobles), and do not suddenly change your character from being a friend to an open enemy of the people (*D* 210–17); if you want to get rid of a prince, there are a number of things you need to do, while if you are a prince who wants to avoid being gotten rid of, there are a number of things you need to do (*D* 398–424).

Advising in this way, Machiavelli displays a curious *reserve* when it comes to assessing the various goals and ends men pursue. Rather than, in Ciceronian fashion, simply affirming some goals and rejecting others and then proceeding to tell men, on the basis of what we know from studying history, what to do, Machiavelli implicitly grants a kind of legitimacy to goals of all kinds, and tells men what to do only if they happen to be pursuing one goal in particular. He does not always say, 'because X is valuable, and because the world, as history teaches, is such that men who do Y get X, do Y', but often says, 'if you value X, then do Y, for the world and man in general, as I know and as others may come to know from observing history, are such that those who do Y, get X'. This second way of talking, while affirming the value of history to those who want X, leaves open whether or not X is in fact valuable and whether or not men should value it and strive to achieve it. True, there are passages, such as his description of the Roman emperors in Book I of the *Discourses*, where he presents history as something from which men may learn what they should value and desire and how they should behave tout court. But such moments are exceptional within a *prevailing* mode of commentary which, as we saw in Chapter 1, is non-committal when it comes to the ends of man. Machiavelli thus commonly affirms the value of history on grounds that, *regardless* of what people want to do and get, it provides knowledge and models which can help them to do

and get it. History teaches us not what to value and how to behave, but only what, in order to get whatever it is we happen to value and want, to do.

Machiavelli can reasonably claim that the past can have this value for us because he believes that

if the present be compared with the remote past, it is easily seen that in all cities and in all peoples there are the same desires and the same passions as there always were. So that, if one examines with diligence the past, it is easy to foresee the future of any commonwealth, and to apply those remedies which were used of old; or, if one does not find that remedies were used, to devise new ones owing to the similarity between events. But, since such studies are neglected and what is read is not understood, or, if it be understood, is not applied in practice by those who rule, the consequence is that similar troubles occur at all times. (*D* 207–08)

In this and other passages (*D* 517), Machiavelli is in complete agreement with Polybius who, committed to writing *pragmatike historia* — military and political history aimed at teaching statesmen and military men how to conduct their affairs — writes,

The mere statement of a fact may interest us but is of no benefit to us: but when we add the cause of it, study of history becomes fruitful. For it is the mental transference of similar circumstances to our own times that gives us the means of forming presentiments of what is about to happen, and enables us at certain times to take precautions and at others by producing former conditions to face with more confidence the difficulties that menace us. (*His* XII. 25b.1–3; see also VI. 2.8–10, XII. 25i.8–9)³³

For both Polybius and Machiavelli, history would not provide us with useful knowledge and valuable models were it not for the facts that men stay the same; that the situations in which men find themselves endlessly recur; that men are capable of recognizing this recurrence; that the causes of those situations are by and large naturalistic and to a significant extent answerable to human decision and action; that men can come through observation and reason to know those causes and to know what will happen; that men can act on that knowledge in a way that fulfills their ambitions, whatever they may be; that men may imitate what they deem to be great; and that the socio-political and military dimension of human existence is of paramount importance. In short, the republican idea of the value of history is grounded in the republican vision of history.

³³ On the sources and nature of Polybius's *pragmatike historia*, see Walbank, *Polybius*, pp. 32–96; Hahm, 'Polybius' Applied Political Theory'. For Machiavelli's Response to Polybius, see Hulliung, *Citizen Machiavelli*, pp. 151–67, 172–83; Bondanella, *Machiavelli and the Art of Renaissance History*, p. 16.

Paradise Lost

In the final books of *Paradise Lost*, Michael formally presents to Adam a vision of human experience over time in response to a divine command that is conditional upon Adam and Eve's proper response to the sentence of 'Perpetual banishment' from paradise (XI. 108):

If patiently thy bidding they obey,
Dismiss them not disconsolate; reveal
To *Adam* what shall come in future days,
As I shall thee enlighten, intermix
My Cov'nant in the woman's seed renew'd;
So send them forth, though sorrowing, yet in peace: (XI. 112–17)

As many defenders of the final books have felt and argued, the final vision of history is addressed not just by Michael to Adam, but also by the poet out of his general ambition to write a great epic poem that justifies the ways of God to humans at large. Michael's vision of history is larger than the occasion of its presentation with the result that we feel the poem ends with Milton's vision of what in history is important not just to Adam, but to all of us.³⁴

That this vision, deriving in many ways from descriptions of and allusions to history earlier in the poem, will be fundamentally at odds with the republican vision of history is clear from the start when Michael leads Adam to the summit of the highest hill in paradise from which 'His Eye might [. . .] command wherever stood / City of old or modern Fame, the Seat / Of mightiest Empire' (XI. 385–87). From here, Adam certainly sees 'where *Rome* was to sway / The World' (XI. 405–06), but Michael is not about to follow Augustine upon whose Christian

³⁴ For a history of how the final books of the poem have been defended in criticism from 1942 to 1979, and an account of how this defense commonly makes recourse to the way in which the reader is educated by them, see Stanley Fish, 'Transmuting the Lump: *Paradise Lost*, 1942–1979', in *Doing What Comes Naturally*, pp. 247–93. For more recent treatments which emphasize that in the final books Milton is expressing his vision of history and educating the reader by way of Michael's revelation of history to Adam, see Thomas Amorose, 'Milton the Apocalyptic Historian: Competing Genres in *Paradise Lost*, Books XI–XII', *Milton Studies*, 17 (1983), 141–62; David Loewenstein, *Milton and the Drama of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Regina Schwartz, 'From Shadowy Types to Shadowy Types: The Unendings of *Paradise Lost*', *Milton Studies*, 24 (1988), 123–39. See also Jameela Lares who argues that Michael's homiletic strategies in the final books are continuous with Milton's mode of address to the reader over the course of the entire poem, in 'Paradise Lost, Books XI, and XII, and the Homiletic Tradition', *Milton Studies*, 34 (1998), 99–116.

historical consciousness Rome impinged so deeply. Neither will he follow or draw upon those medieval political theorists, such as Ptolemy of Lucca and Marsilius of Padua, who incorporated comprehensive interpretations of the history of Rome from republic to empire into their Christian republicanism.³⁵ This is because Michael does not share the republicans' view that the history of Rome is the history of the world. As the survey of the empires of the world suggests, Rome is just one seat of empire among a host of others, all of which are dismissed out of a concern for something more noble:

but to nobler sights
Michael from *Adam's* eyes the Film remov'd
 Which that false Fruit that promis'd clearer sight
 Had bred; (XI. 411–14)

For the classical republicans and Machiavelli, there *were* no sights nobler than republican Rome swaying the world, and the notion that scenes of fratricide, disease, misery, death, and total annihilation deriving from man's natural pravity (with which Michael begins) and scenes of persecution and crucifixion would qualify as such sights would have struck them as being ludicrous. And whereas patriotism was both a major driving force and a desired outcome of the historiographical practice of both the classical Roman and Florentine republicans, Milton conveys a vision of history by way of an angel who has no nation and who does not once use the terms 'England' or 'Britain'. This does not necessarily mean that Milton never refers to the history of his own nation in these final books. As Christopher Hill and others have argued, there are several 'parallels' and 'analogies' between the events Michael describes and seventeenth-century English political and military history, and it seems likely that at least some of these parallels amount to oblique references or allusions to England. But when considering things on the whole, even Hill concedes that 'none of the three great poems published after 1660 is about England'.³⁶ The references to it in the final books are occasional and oblique at best, there are no English heroes, and there is no account of the precious stone set in the silver sea. King Arthur, the subject of Milton's early plans for a national epic,³⁷ is long gone.

³⁵ See B. Smalley, 'Sallust in the Middle Ages', in *Classical Influences on European Culture AD 500–1500*, ed. by R. R. Bolgar (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 165–75; Blythe, "Civic Humanism", and *Medieval Political Thought*.

³⁶ Hill, *Milton and the English Revolution*, p. 361.

³⁷ See *Mansus* (*Manso*) (lines 78–84); *Epitaphium Damonis* (*Damon's Epitaph*) (lines 161–78). Both poems are included in *Complete Poems and Major Prose*.

Even though the final vision of history is written in the national language, no amount of reading between its lines can make it a Ciceronian expression of patriotism aimed at inspiring its readers with a love of England and a desire to serve it above all else.

In addition, whereas Israel is treated by the classical republicans as simply one of Rome's troublesome territories and usually treated by Machiavelli as simply one nation among others which furnishes evidence for his claims about men and politics, it is of course central to Michael's vision of history. Michael describes in detail the history of this 'mighty Nation' (XII. 124) chosen by God for the reason that its history is in an essential sense the history of all nations of the world. What makes it so is neither that it conquered the world as Rome did, nor that it remained stable under a mixed constitution for a long period of time as Sparta did, but, first, that in the seed of its father and founder, Abraham, 'All Nations shall be blest' (XII. 126). Immediately proceeding to reiterate what to Adam at this moment in his life is a mysterious claim, Michael explains to him that 'by that Seed / Is meant thy great deliverer, who shall bruise / The Serpent's head' (XII. 148–50), and, after describing the history of Israel, describes how the Son, descended from Abraham, defeats the works of Satan in mankind. Michael thus makes clear that the history of the nation of Israel is the history of the world in the sense that it is an Israelite, a man descended from Abraham, who destroys Satan's works in all of us and thereby provides the possibility of salvation from the eternal misery we all otherwise would have experienced as just punishment for our guilt that derives from the disobedience of Adam and Eve. Second, the history of Israel is, as we will see, the history of the world in the sense that its main figures and events are both prophecies and signs of the Son and his first and second comings.

Ignoring Athens, Sparta, Rome, and Britain and foregrounding Israel in this way, Michael conforms with his explicit account of what is and is not worthy of record. Referring to the days of the giants described in Genesis 6. 4, but also ridiculing the Romans and their triumphs, Michael claims,

For in those days Might only shall be admir'd,
And Valor and Heroic Virtue call'd;
To overcome in Battle, and subdue
Nations, and bring home spoils with infinite
Man-slaughter, shall be held the highest pitch
Of human Glory, and for Glory done
Of triumph, to be styl'd great Conquerors,
Patrons of Mankind, Gods, and Sons of Gods,
Destroyers rightlier call'd and Plagues of men.
Thus Fame shall be achiev'd, renown on Earth,
And what most merits fame in silence hid. (XI. 689–99)

Though this critique of military prowess, which runs through the entire poem and which Michael repeats before his account of Noah, is commonly taken to be directed against the pagan epic poets who supposedly glorified it, it is important to see that such a critique applies just as much to the ancient historians and Machiavelli. For, as we have seen, they focused on military deeds, taught that many such deeds were heroic and therefore worthy of record and imitation, established to an important extent the fame, renown, and glory of those who performed them, and tended to remain silent about what, for Milton, most merits fame. What most merits fame, as we know from the critique of those in limbo in Book III (448–54) and the invocation to Book IX, is ‘the better fortitude / Of Patience and Heroic Martyrdom’ (IX. 31–32). Working against both the pagan epic poets and historians, Michael celebrates this fortitude by observing the acts of the heroes of faith and the ‘God-like act’ performed by the Son (XII. 427). Michael thus does not simply happen to treat things that are different from those treated by the republicans. He does so out of a commitment to entirely different criteria for identifying what is heroic and virtuous and so worthy of renown and fame.³⁸

This is further evident from the fact that, while in the final books Michael briefly describes single just men such as Enoch, Noah, Moses, Abraham, and other heroes of the faith, those descriptions do not amount to anything like the extended character portraits of figures such as Catiline, Cato, Caesar, Marius, Scipio, Hannibal, Jugurtha, and Camillus that the ancients carefully place within their narratives. It is, moreover, in part because Michael gives no speeches to anyone performing the acts he narrates that his vision of history is not populated by the kind of characters one finds in history as envisioned by the ancients. And while, in the final books, Michael describes specific geographical sites such as Egypt, the Red Sea, and Canaan, his descriptions are far removed from the ancients’ comprehensive description of the details of particular sites and broader topographies and how they affect the fate of cities and the outcome of battles. Indeed, Michael’s history is openly hostile to the ancients’ concern with place and that love of the soil which Livy identifies as an essential component of patriotism and the precondition for the very existence of the republic, and which the heroes of his history such as Furius Camillus so powerfully express (*Liv* II. 1.5, V. 51–54). For in response to Adam’s attachment to the garden and his anxiety over finding God outside it, Michael presents the entire vision of history to Adam with the aim of assuring him that the

³⁸ For Milton’s move away from his early alliance with classical notions of what was worthy of record, see Irene Samuel, ‘Milton and the Ancients on the Writing of History’, *Milton Studies*, 2 (1964), 131–48.

entire earth, 'Not this Rock only' (XI. 336), belongs to God and that he is in fact omnipresent. At least when it comes to the presence of God, all places are equal. But even if Adam and Eve did want to cling to that rock they love, they would not be able to do so, for Michael informs Adam that the 'Mount / Of Paradise' on which they stand will 'by might of Waves be mov'd / Out of this place' so that Adam may know 'that God áttributes to place / No sanctity, if none be thither brought / By Men who there frequent, or therein dwell' (XI. 829–38).³⁹ Michael also displays little interest in the decline of the Roman republic, or of any republic for that matter, though he does describe in Sallustian and Livian vein how forms of luxury and pleasure-seeking corrupt various individuals and communities, observe the fate of tyrants such as Nimrod and the Pharoah of Egypt, and describe some of the vicissitudes of ancient Israel.

There are occasions in *Paradise Lost* on which Milton and his characters insist, like Machiavelli and several of the ancient republicans, on a naturalistic explanation of the causes of human experience. Early in Book III, for example, Milton is clearly differentiating his poem from pagan epics such as the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid* by insisting on a naturalistic explanation of human action: whereas pagan epic commonly identifies the gods and their decrees as primary causes of major events in human history, Milton's God here is most emphatic that the fall of man was neither decreed by him, nor caused by Fate, nor influenced in the slightest way by his foreknowledge, nor authored by any other supernatural force, but was mainly the result of man exercising the freedom which was a dimension of the perfect human 'nature' that God created (III. 95–128). The poem also sometimes describes the causes of postlapsarian human experience over time in terms of what man is. The experience of being expelled from paradise, for example, is described as something that follows by the law of Nature from what man becomes as a result of his sin. As God informs the Son,

But longer in that Paradise to dwell,
The Law I gave to Nature him forbids:
Those pure immortal Elements that know
No gross, no unharmonious mixture foul,
Eject him tainted now, and purge him off
As a distemper, gross to air as gross,
And mortal food, as may dispose him best

³⁹ For more on this 'anti-sedentarism' and 'indifference to place' in the poem, see Lawrence Manley, *Literature and Culture in Early Modern London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 531–82.

For dissolution wrought by Sin, that first
 Distemper'd all things, and of incorrupt
 Corrupted. (XI. 48–57)

Having become a gross, distempered, unharmonious, tainted, foul, corrupt mixture, human nature, as several critics have observed, would suffice to bring about its own expulsion from the pure elements of paradise.⁴⁰ Observing at the outset of his presentation that the human experience in general is a function of 'supernal Grace contending / With sinfulness of Men' (XI. 359–60), Michael confirms Sin's view that besides being a kind of action, sin may also be a corrupt and corrupting element residing within man, and indicates that history is essentially a function of divine grace contending with this element. This notion of sin as part of the being or nature of man, besides simply one act performed by him, is again evident when Michael introduces the first vision by telling Adam to behold

wand'ring o'er the Earth
 Th' effects which thy original crime hath wrought
 In some to spring from thee, who never touch'd
 Th'excepted Tree, nor with the Snake conspir'd,
 Nor sinn'd thy sin, yet from that sin derive
 Corruption to bring forth more violent deeds. (XI. 423–28)

Identifying the sinful act of disobedience as a kind of urcause of what all humans, no matter what their nation, do and experience, Michael here also identifies the corrupt human being resulting from that act as the immediate cause of the violent deeds that constitute history. Michael makes the point again in Book XII when he more clearly identifies sin as a form of degeneracy that permanently inheres in all human agents and that incites people to act in certain ways:

Doubt not but that sin
 Will reign among them, as of thee begot;
 And therefore was Law given them to evince
 Thir natural pravity, by stirring up
 Sin against Law to fight; (XII. 285–89)

As we have seen, Michael also attributes the loss of outward liberty and the existence of tyranny to the fact that man, as a result of the fall, has lost his inward liberty.

Like the republicans, then, Milton understands human nature to be involved in the causes of human action and experience over time. But his naturalistic causal analysis of human experience differs radically from that of the republicans in that,

⁴⁰ See Rogers, *Matter of Revolution*, pp. 147–61.

as we observed in Chapter 1, his conception of human nature is different from theirs, and he grants momentous causal power to a particular act of treason which for them never occurred. More importantly, Milton's account of the causes of human experience is only partly naturalistic, and while the poem's comprehensive account of supernatural intervention in human affairs may well conflict with its naturalistic account, it also clearly differentiates its historical vision from the kind of naturalistic causal explanation which, though qualified by references to Fortune and the gods, nevertheless predominates in republican historiography from Polybius onwards. There is, first of all, Satan, the 'cause' that moved Adam and Eve to fall off from their creator (I. 28), and Milton describes in great detail the particular way in which Satan manages to affect man in this way. In addition, though Michael does not mention them, the narrator early in the poem claims that the other rebel angels exercise a significant influence over mankind once Satan has done his work, for 'wand'ring o'er the Earth', they will corrupt man to forsake God and 'Devils to adore for Deities' (I. 365–73). Moreover, because in the final three books of the poem Milton represents human depravity and death not only as the consequences of a human act of disobedience and something that conforms with the law of nature, but also in terms of the activity of Sin and Death, the entire human experience of disease, suffering, and death is made to appear at least in part as the result of the ongoing machinations of supernatural agents.

Milton's account of why things occur as they do also of course differs from the republican account as a result of the way he represents the Christian God acting upon them. This god affects history in the general sense that nothing occurs without his permission: it is 'Through God's high sufferance for the trial of man', for example, that the devils wander the earth (I. 366), and while Sin and Death feel that it is Satan who grants them Dominion over the world (X. 400), it is in fact God who 'call'd and drew them thither / My Hell-hounds, to lick up the draff and filth / Which man's polluting Sin with taint hath shed / On what was pure' (X. 629–32). God also affects human history by directly acting within it and upon its agents. After making man and his world, God engages in direct conversation with him, responds directly to his wishes, and sends his angels to converse with him. After man has disobeyed him and thereby vilified the nature that God made, God, as we have seen, also acts directly upon that nature. God makes this clear in Book III when, addressing the Son, he claims that besides renewing his lapsed powers, he will uphold him so 'that he may know how frail / His fall'n condition is, and to me owe / All his deliv'rance, and to none but me' (III. 180–82). He will, moreover, 'clear thir senses dark, / What may suffice, and soft'n stony hearts / To pray, repent, and bring obedience due' as well as 'place within them as a guide / My

Umpire *Conscience*' (III. 188–95). This is confirmed in the final book when Michael informs Adam that after the first coming, the Son will send a Comforter to man 'who shall dwell / His Spirit within them, and the Law of Faith / Working through love, upon thir hearts shall write, / To guide them in all truth, and also arm / With spiritual Armor' (XII. 486–91).

That God directly alters what man is, or at least those he has elected, however, does not prevent him from judging and sentencing him to a particular punishment for his bad act. That death and woe were not brought directly into the world simply by the mortal taste of the forbidden fruit, as the invocation to the poem and the later description of Nature purging him off as a distemper might suggest, but as a result of God's judgement and sentencing of those who performed it is clear when the narrator refers to

judgment giv'n,
That brought into this World a world of woe,
Sin and her shadow Death, and Misery
Death's Harbinger: (IX. 10–13)

The point is made again at the opening of Book X where the narrator claims that the fall into the condition of suffering, death, and banishment from paradise is 'the penalty' incurred by Adam and Eve for their disobedience (X. 15). At the opening of Book XI, however, a variation of this explanation of misery and death by way of supernatural agency is introduced when God explains to the Son that because mankind lost happiness by disobeying him, immortality 'serv'd but to eternize woe; / Till I provided Death; so Death becomes / His final remedy' (XI. 60–62). While God here continues to identify the human experience of death not as something that would have occurred without his intervention but as something for which he is directly responsible, he here identifies it as the result of an act of divine mercy on what is dear to him rather than an act of divine punishment that satisfies justice. Besides describing this death, the final books present a catalogue of God's specific interventions in human affairs, ranging from rescuing individuals such as Enoch and flooding the world, to subjecting mankind to tyranny, raising the nation of Israel from Abraham, and then, when he is united with Man in the Son, delivering mankind from the Law, defeating Sin and Death, and judging mankind at the dissolution of the world.

Given that Milton in this poem thinks of human nature and the causes of human experience in a way that differs fundamentally from the way the republicans think of these things, it is not surprising that he also differs from them on the issue of the pattern and shape this experience assumes over the long run. He differs from them, first of all, by representing the entire experience of mankind as one that

occurs within a broader experience of supernatural deities residing in the universe at large for eternity. Though the invocation to the poem gives no indication of it, it is in fact within a larger story about God, his Son, angels, Satan, Chaos, Night, Sin, and Death that the story of man is told. Indeed, from one perspective offered by the poem, human history is the means by which the struggle between the supernatural deities, which pre-exists the advent of mankind, is waged and brought to an end. For it is partly in reaction to the failed rebellion led by Satan that God creates man and earth, and it is an act within history — the Son's act of dying for man — that 'Shall bruise the head of *Satan*, crush his strength / Defeating Sin and Death, his two main arms' (XII. 430–31). Moreover, as Loewenstein observes, Michael's narrative of Moses and the River-dragon only confirms 'the poet's inclination to depict history in terms suggesting an apocalyptic struggle between God and Antichrist'.⁴¹ While it might be going too far to say that in *Paradise Lost* the human experience on earth, while described in great detail, is nevertheless represented as simply an episode in the life of the universe, it is still important to see that it is within this broader scene and its supernatural agents that Milton situates the human experience. There is thus a sense in which Milton's historiography is less anthropocentric than republican historiography is. For, departing from classical epic, the latter tends not to situate human experience within struggles between the immortals taking place on a stage of much broader temporal and spatial dimensions than that occupied by human players.

* * *

This conception of human experience as something that unfolds within a universe where supernatural deities interact has far-reaching consequences for how both the possible and actual overall shapes of that experience are envisioned. One shape that was possible but that did not materialize was that of a single endless state of bliss and happiness in paradise, assured by an ongoing obedience to God. During this time, Adam would have reared altars to God and related to his sons the appearances of God (XI. 317–27); Adam and Eve's generations might have 'come / From all the ends of th' Earth, to celebrate / And reverence' their father (XI. 344–46); mankind might eventually have become as angels (V. 493) and have ascended through contemplation to God. Another shape that was possible, as God makes clear in Book III, but that did not in fact materialize was that of a short state of bliss in paradise brought to an end by an act of disobedience closely followed by God's annihilation of Adam and Eve. A third possibility was that of a short state of bliss brought to an end by an act of disobedience which resulted in God's sentencing mankind to an

⁴¹ Loewenstein, *Milton and the Drama of History*, p. 111.

ongoing experience of misery and death in this world and an ongoing experience of misery with Satan and the fallen angels in hell. The shape that does (or will) in fact materialize may reasonably be described in several ways.⁴² But if, by 'human history', one means *the entire experience* of the masterwork of creation, then one of these is as a four-stage sequence, the first stage of which consists of a relatively brief experience of happiness in paradise that is brought to an end by the fall. The second consists in an experience of suffering and death from the fall until the first coming of the Son. It is during this stage that Israel grows into a nation under laws ordained by God. The third stage runs from the first to the second coming. Though, as we have seen, the first coming has considerable ramifications for the human condition, it does not remove mankind from the condition of suffering and dying; even after the Son has come, the world will go on under her own weight groaning (XII. 537–39). The fourth and final stage consists in a second experience of happiness and bliss. This final stage is complicated in two ways. First, though Milton does not explicitly refer to the millennium (the thousand-year period before the end of time, during which Satan is bound in hell and the saints and priests of God and Christ rule the earth (Revelation 20. 1–10)), there are, as Revard points out, some indications in the poem that such a period will occur.⁴³ Secondly, the second experience of happiness and bliss will be shared only by those who perform works of faith during their lives; those 'Bad men and Angels' who fail to perform such works will be sentenced by the Son to suffer in Hell forever (III. 330–33). Those critics who, on the basis of the graphic presentation of suffering in the final books, claim that Milton presents history as having a tragic shape or pattern⁴⁴ are thus

⁴² For a description of Michael's vision of postlapsarian human history as the six-stage sequence described by Augustine or a three-stage sequence (Cain and Abel to Noah; Noah to Christ; Christ to now) deriving from Joachim de Fiore and Augustine, see H. R. MacCallum, 'Milton and Sacred History: Books XI and XII of *Paradise Lost*', in *Essays in English Literature from the Renaissance to the Victorian Age*, ed. by Millar MacLure and F. W. Watt (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964), pp. 149–68; Edward W. Taylor, *Milton's Poetry: Its Development in Time* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1979), p. 71; Loewenstein, *Milton and the Drama of History*, p. 96.

⁴³ Stella Revard, 'Milton and Millenarianism: From the Nativity Ode to *Paradise Regained*', in *Milton and the Ends of Time*, ed. by Juliet Cummins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 42–81 (pp. 57–62). Milton seems at times to be indifferent to the details of the final days: the Son shall receive the faithful 'into bliss, / Whether in Heav'n or Earth, for then the Earth / Shall all be Paradise, far happier place / Than this of *Eden*, and far happier days' (XII. 462–65).

⁴⁴ See Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic*, pp. 465–66; Lewalski, 'Paradise Lost and Milton's Politics', p. 163; Loewenstein, *Milton and the Drama of History*, pp. 92–125. For further argumentation against this view, see Grossman, 'Authors to Themselves', p. 165. See also Hideyuki

mistaken, since they fail to acknowledge that Michael continually interrupts his description of human suffering with references to the second coming that inaugurates what, at least for the faithful, is the 'happy end' (XII. 605). What tragedies have happy endings? Human experience in its entirety would have had a tragic shape if no one, able and willing, had volunteered to pay the deadly ransom, and God, demanding as he certainly would have, that justice be served and that the ransom be paid, either simply annihilated Adam and Eve on the spot or permitted them to have a posterity, all of whom would suffer, die, and be reborn to eternal misery with Satan in hell. *That* would have been tragic.

It is on the basis of this four-stage model that fallen human experience is conceived, first, as the experience of being *banished*. This is made clear when God tells Michael to 'drive out the sinful Pair, / From hallow'd ground th' unholy, and denounce / To them, and to thir Progeny from thence / Perpetual banishment' (XI. 105–08). And as Eve recognizes at the end of the poem, Adam is 'banish't hence' as a result of her 'wilful crime' (XII. 619). But, as we have seen, fallen human experience is also conceived as the experience of being both justly and mercifully *punished* for an act of treason. As Michael puts it responding to Adam's objection to the suffering mankind must endure, because man failed to reverence God's image in themselves, 'so abject is thir punishment' (XI. 520). Finally, the two middle stages of human history are also conceived as a state of being *tried* during which individuals perform actions the quality of which will determine whether or not they in particular will participate in the final regaining of life in paradise. As God puts it, human life after the fall is essentially 'Life / Tri'd in sharp tribulation, and refin'd / By Faith and faithful works', after which death will deliver mankind up 'to second Life' (XI. 62–64).

These notions of human experience at large as essentially the experience of banishment from paradise, punishment for a crime against God, and trial upon which not our fame amongst men but the status of our souls in the afterlife depends are for the most part alien to the republicans. It should be acknowledged, however, that in *On the Republic*, Cicero has Scipio postulate an afterlife in which statesmen are rewarded, and Polybius and Livy flirt with the notion of the gods occasionally punishing Rome for its falling away from *pietas*. In addition, it could

Shitaka, 'From Tragedy to Epic', Chapter 2 of *Milton's Idea of the Son in the Shaping of Paradise Lost as a Christocentric Epic* (Tokyo: Eihosha, 1996), pp. 40–78. Though Shitaka is mainly concerned with the genre of the poem, I find that many of his observations concerning Milton's decision to abandon his plans to represent the fall as a tragedy in favour of an epic representation militate against the view that the vision of history with which the poem concludes is tragic.

be said that some of the specific patterns of the middle stages of history as Michael represents them resemble in some ways the big picture as the republicans see it. As Machiavelli sometimes envisions world history in terms of periods of decline terminated by floods, fires, or plagues that purge the world and reconstitute virtue, so Michael describes how mankind after the fall will become so corrupt that God out of anger will destroy the world and how mankind will then live 'With some regard to what is just and right' (XII. 16) before again becoming corrupt. And as Machiavelli sometimes envisions history as the long slide from ancient virtue to modern corruption, so Michael's narrative is premised upon a state of virtue in the distant past followed by a state of corruption running up to the present. There is also a sense in which Michael's narrative of human experience between the loss and the regaining of paradise can be said to confirm the Machiavellian view that the amount of goodness and badness in the world remains the same. For though he points to particular virtuous individuals such as Enoch and Noah and other heroes of faith, the overall impression is that the 'sinfulness of men' contending with God's grace remains basically the same.

But rather than representing the cataclysmic flood as a natural occurrence, something that follows naturally from the corruption of mankind, Michael describes it as something that is directly caused by an angry god, and he makes clear that history will not be an endless repetition of such periods of corruption terminated by purgative floods or fires. And whereas for Machiavelli the transition from ancient virtue to modern corruption was a long, slow process caused mainly by changes in education, law, religion, and custom, for Michael the transition from ancient virtue to the corruption we now know was a punctual event caused by one bad act. In addition, as Michael makes clear in his discussion of 'those days [in which] Might only shall be admir'd, / And Valor and Heroic Virtue call'd' (XI. 689–90), what Machiavelli held to be the noble ancients are for Michael simply early instances of 'Plagues of men' (XI. 697). And concentrating on Israel, Michael in no way shares Machiavelli's sense of a progress of virtue from one part of the world to another while the total amount of virtue within it remains the same. Michael, moreover, has nothing to do with the Polybian/Machiavellian concept of history as an *anakuklōsis* which is sporadically interrupted by conquest and the establishment of mixed forms of government. And while he does attend to some extent to the existence of societies and institutions over time (such as the earliest human society, the nation and government of Israel, and the church) and the way they become corrupt, he does not invest in the Machiavellian notion of renovation. On the contrary, his descriptions of both Enoch and Noah demonstrate the total inefficacy of virtuous individuals who would renovate their societies

by preaching and setting good examples for them, and in his account of the corruption of the church (XII. 502–39), he mentions neither St Francis nor St Dominic who, according to Machiavelli, renovated it.

Describing the difference between the republican and the Miltonic vision of history in these ways is still in an important sense inadequate, since it proceeds on the premise that, for all of the differences between them, both visions still agree in thinking of history as a sequence of events which, even if they do recur, can best be imaged as points on a continuous line extending unidirectionally and infinitely through space, and best be described by a sophisticated narrative that describes them in the order in which they occur and that makes clear and intelligible the causal connections between them. But this is not the case, for as many critics have pointed out, Michael's vision of history is informed by the typological theory of interpretation and history, according to which events in the life of Israel described by the Old Testament are promises and signs, the fulfilment and meaning of which are events in the life of Christ described by the Gospels and Revelation.⁴⁵ This means that though, as we have seen, he insists on the causal connection between some of the events he describes, Michael also observes other kinds of connection between them with the result that he envisions the overall shape of history in a way that differs radically from the way the pagans do. For as Eric Auerbach explains, the typological theory of interpretation 'obviously introduces an entirely new and alien element into the antique conception of history [...]. A connection is established between two events which are linked neither temporally nor causally — a connection which it is impossible to establish by reason in the horizontal dimension [...]. It can be established only if both occurrences are vertically linked to Divine Providence, which alone is able to devise such a plan of history and supply the key to its understanding'.⁴⁶

Though Auerbach ignores Nietzsche's account of how typology 'falsified' the Old Testament and was driven by the sinister impulses of Paul and the early

⁴⁵ For the story of how the recognition of the typological dimension of Michael's vision of history has been invoked to defend the final books, see Fish, 'Transmuting the Lump'. More recent considerations have identified ways in which Milton's typology is incoherent and frustrates both Adam's and the reader's desire for a story that ends and for a coherent vision of history at large. See Schwartz, 'From Shadowy Types to Shadowy Types'; William Walker, 'Typology and *Paradise Lost*, Books XI and XII', *Milton Studies*, 25 (1989), 245–64; Loewenstein, *Milton and the Drama of History*, pp. 120–25.

⁴⁶ Eric Auerbach, *Mimesis*, trans. by Willard Trask (New York: Anchor, 1953; repr. 1957), pp. 64–65.

priesthood, and though he fails to observe ways in which the entire theory is problematic, he nevertheless provides an index to how the overall vision of history moving out of typological theory radically diverges from the ancients' overall vision of history.⁴⁷ And observing the way in which Michael explicitly uses the typological vocabulary, reverses the order of events, continually interrupts his narrative with references to the first and second coming, describes some particular events extensively and huge tracts of time in a single line, continually alludes to earlier passages in the poem, and narrates in a plain syntactical style, several critics have indeed come away with the impression that history is not linear. It is more like 'a series of horizons', 'a Baroque staircase in which various illusionistic devices are employed to increase the sense of distance', and an 'image of eternity' which can be seen 'at a single (intuitive) glance'.⁴⁸ Michael's description of earthly relations of space, time, and causation which presupposes a classical linear model of history thus uneasily coexists with his description of the Son as both promise and fulfilment which presupposes a very different model.

That Michael draws on a way of thinking about the history of Israel and the world that is alien to the republicans does not, however, mean that he differs entirely from them in his notion of what history has to offer. Like Machiavelli and the ancients, Milton presents history as something that, at least properly attended to, can provide people with evidence for propositions about themselves and their world, including its political dimension, and he thinks of the knowledge that may be derived from this evidence as something which can help them to avoid the mistakes and errors of others and to act well. Milton thinks this knowledge can benefit mankind in this way because, like the republicans, he thinks of mankind (in its fallen form) and its condition as remaining basically the same over time. In addition, Milton by way of Michael might reasonably be seen to conform with the republican practice of singling out virtuous examples to be imitated. For, as some

⁴⁷ For Nietzsche's account of the rise of typological interpretations, see *Der Antichrist*, vol. VI: *Kritische Studienausgabe*, ed. by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1988). For further problems with the theory itself, see Joseph Galdon, *Typology and Seventeenth-Century Literature* (The Hague: Mouton, 1975), pp. 48–50, 67–68; Sanford Budick, 'Milton and the Scene of Interpretation: From Typology Toward Midrash', in *Midrash and Literature*, ed. by Geoffrey Hartman and Sanford Budick (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), pp. 195–205; Timothy Bahti, 'Auerbach's *Mimesis*: Figural Structure and Historical Narrative', in *After Strange Texts*, ed. by Gregory Jay and David Miller (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1985), pp. 124–45.

⁴⁸ See Isabel MacCaffrey, '*Paradise Lost* as *Myth*' (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959), p. 61; MacCallum, 'Milton and Sacred History', pp. 167–68; Fish, *Surprised by Sin*, pp. 310, 322.

readers have observed, those single men, such as Enoch and Noah, daring single to be just and utter odious truth though worlds judged them perverse, seem to have set a model that Milton himself followed, and it seems that, even if they did fail to reform their societies, Michael presents them as figures to be emulated by all. The Son, too, emerges as an example to be followed, for at the end of it all, Adam claims to have been taught 'by his example whom I now / Acknowledge my Redeemer ever blest' (XII. 572–73).

Some of the particular propositions which Michael urges Adam and the reader to learn from his account of history, moreover, are the same as those the ancient Roman historians and Machiavelli urge us to learn from their very different understandings of history. Sallust himself, for example, might well have written that man's woe stems from 'Man's effeminate slackness' (XI. 634). Adam's claim to see 'Peace to corrupt no less than War to waste' (XI. 784) in light of the giants' profligacy and indulgence in 'luxurious wealth' following their 'great exploits' (XI. 788–90) may also reasonably be seen to confirm both classical republican and Machiavellian perspectives on how the evils of luxury can creep in when a society no longer fears an enemy and enjoys peace and prosperity. And, as we have seen, Michael's observations on liberty, reason, and passion have some rough precedents in the writings of the classical republicans. Finally, some of the specific precepts Adam infers from history also conform with republican ideas concerning how to behave well. Learning from the suffering of mankind that he is to bear with fortitude and endure whatever comes his way, Adam might reasonably be seen to confirm Polybius's view that 'the surest and indeed the only method of learning how to bear bravely the vicissitudes of fortune, is to recall the calamities of others' (*His* I. 2). By inferring from history that one is to be moderate, patient, and reasonable, and by presenting history as something that provides rare examples of such behaviour which, indeed, inspire Adam to follow them, Michael affirms some other aspects of the republican ethical sensibility.

This, however, hardly warrants the claim that Michael 'specifically bends scriptural material toward the presentation of historical lessons of a significantly meritocratic and republican cast'⁴⁹ — not, at least, where this would mean presenting lessons of the kind presented by Polybius, Cicero, Sallust, Livy, and Machiavelli. For Michael's lessons, including the ones about politics, are of course Christian lessons, many of which are fundamentally at odds with those of the republicans. First of all, there is no indication whatsoever that Adam or any of his

⁴⁹ Radzinowicz, 'Politics of *Paradise Lost*', p. 213.

descendants are to draw on history in order to achieve feats of forensic, deliberative, and epideictic oratory. And Michael not only shows no interest in but is openly hostile to the wisdom about military affairs which, for the classical republicans and Machiavelli, was one of the major sources of its value. Thus, rather than affirming the battle scenes he presents to Adam as opportunities to see, for example, that soldiers are the sinews of war or that infantry is superior to cavalry, he observes that they display 'great exploits [...] of true virtue void' (XI. 790). In so doing, Michael presents scriptural material directly towards the presentation of lessons of a significantly non-republican cast. Moreover, the wisdom Michael directs Adam and us to derive from his vision of history consists mainly of an awareness of the truths of a religion to which the ancients did not subscribe and of which Machiavelli is highly critical. Michael is clear and explicit about this from the start when he informs Adam that he will 'show' Adam what shall come in future days so that he 'may'st believe, and be confirm'd' that the loving God is present in the fallen world and provides signs of that presence (XI. 349–55).

As we have seen, Michael goes on to present human history as the occasion for knowing a wide range of other propositions, some of which are less consoling than this concerning the ubiquity of God, and most of which are also of a decidedly non-republican cast. Thus, he displays to Adam 'a monstrous crew' of diseases that Adam 'may'st know / What misery th' inabstinence of *Eve* / Shall bring on men' (XI. 474–77), that he may understand that this kind of suffering is just punishment for the way mankind vilified God's image in themselves (XI. 515–26), but that he may also understand that those who live in accordance with 'The rule of not too much' can live to an old age and 'be with ease / Gather'd, not harshly pluckt, for death mature' (XI. 531–37). Michael observes that God saves Enoch 'to shew thee what reward / Awaits the good' and then presents the flood as the 'punishment' the rest shall suffer (XI. 709–10). This flood, moreover, shall carry away the Mount of Paradise on which they now stand and turn it into a barren island haunted by seals, orcs, and sea-mews, 'To teach' Adam 'that God átttributes to place / No sanctity, if none be thither brought / By Men who there frequent, or therein dwell' (XI. 836–38). The survival of Adam and the animals and God's covenant with man in the form of a rainbow assures Adam that 'Man shall live / With all the Creatures, and thir seed preserve' (XI. 872–73), and means, as Michael further explains, that the natural world shall hold its course until 'fire purge all things new, / Both Heav'n and Earth, wherein the just shall dwell' (XI. 900–01).

Michael's account of Nimrod in Book XII is rightly taken by Adam as evidence not of the republican understanding of the relation between man and animals but

of the Christian view he already holds on grounds of personal experience: God gives dominion to man over the animals but not over men. As we have seen, Michael identifies further general but in some ways inconsistent propositions about liberty, reason, passion, and tyranny which may be inferred from this incident. In response to Michael's narration of the rise of the nation of Israel, Adam comes to see that 'all Nations shall be blest' in the seed of Abraham (XII. 277), but Michael also takes this narrative as the occasion for informing Adam of the basic truths of Pauline theology (XII. 285–306). In response to Michael's narration of the history of Israel from the entry into Canaan to the birth of the Messiah, Adam comes to understand 'Why our great expectation should be call'd / The seed of Woman' (XII. 378–79), but still stands in need of correction when it comes to understanding exactly how the Messiah will redeem him and defeat Satan, Sin, and Death (XII. 386–435). Michael then concludes his narrative with an account of Church corruption and the persecution of Christians from which Adam and we are to learn that 'spiritual' power should not be joined with 'Secular' power and that 'carnal power' should not be used to enforce religious belief and practice (XII. 515–22). As we have seen, such lessons are incompatible with classical republican and Machiavellian views on how rulers of political societies rightly use secular power to enforce traditional, customary religious belief and practice with the aim of promoting civic virtue and the common good. On the basis of Michael's narrative and vision, Adam comes finally to know that the Son is, as Michael says, 'thy Saviour and thy Lord' (XII. 544). 'Greatly instructed', Adam has achieved 'the sum / Of wisdom' (XII. 557, 575–76), but this Christian wisdom concerning weakness, suffering, and salvation has little in common with the wisdom about war and politics which the ancient pagans derived from their study of history and which they valued so highly.

It is in part because the propositions about the world Michael derives from history are so different from the ones Machiavelli and the republicans derive from it that the way of life he recommends to Adam and to us is also so different. 'Add / Deeds to thy knowledge answerable', he tells Adam, 'add Faith, / Add Virtue, Patience, Temperance, add Love, / By name to come call'd Charity, the soul / Of all the rest' (XII. 581–85). Michael here informs Adam that in light of the human history he has revealed to him, he is not only to know certain things about himself and the world, but also to commit himself to a particular way of living and looking at life which conforms with this knowledge. He makes this point again when he tells Adam to reveal to Eve what he has seen and heard,

That ye may live, which will be many days,
Both in one Faith unanimous though sad,

With cause for evils past, yet much more cheer'd
 With meditation on the happy end. (XII. 602–05)

In so urging Adam and Eve to live in a way which accords with what they have come to know from his revelation of history, Michael follows through with an intention he announces to Adam at the outset when he says that from his revelation of history Adam is to learn not just in the sense of coming to know, but in the sense of coming to feel and to be: he is

to learn

True patience, and to temper joy with fear
 And pious sorrow, equally inur'd
 By moderation either state to bear,
 Prosperous or adverse: so shalt thou lead
 Safest thy life, and best prepar'd endure
 Thy mortal passage when it comes. (XI. 360–66)

Over the course of his observation of history, Adam does indeed take on new feelings and attitudes on the basis of which he commits himself to a particular kind of existence. Thus, in light of his recognition that misery is just punishment but also that some kinds of suffering may be avoided by living temperately, Adam commits himself to a certain attitude towards life and death (though he finds it difficult to live up to it in light of what Michael later shows him):

Henceforth I fly not Death, nor would prolong
 Life much, bent rather how I may be quit
 Fairest and easiest of this cumbrous charge,
 Which I must keep till my appointed day
 Of rend'ring up, and patiently attend
 My dissolution. (XI. 547–52)

In light of the knowledge he so rapidly achieves about his posterity and its world, Adam also comes to adopt a resolution to live in a way which is consistent with this knowledge and which is exemplified by men such as Enoch and Noah. In so doing, he may reasonably be seen to confirm the general republican notion that the value of history derives from the way it provides both insights into the nature of reality and inspiring models of behaviour which are appropriate to that reality. But the 'deeds' to which he and other Christians are to be committed are entirely different from the celebrated acts of the Romans which were commonly referred to by this word, and Michael's use of it here to refer to acts of love and kindness is an aggressive Christian usurpation of the pagan republican vocabulary, as is his use of 'virtue', 'glory', 'wisdom', 'contemplation', 'office', 'fortitude', and 'corruption' over the course of the poem. Adam's 'deeds' will be different because reality as it is

envisioned by Polybius, Livy, Cicero, Sallust, and Machiavelli is different from reality as it is envisioned by Milton's second divine historian.

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Gary Trompf and others have argued that it is important to exercise caution in distinguishing between ancient Graeco-Roman and Christian conceptions of history.⁵⁰ But even exercising caution, and acknowledging that Milton does share some ground with Machiavelli and the ancients, it seems clear that, in *Paradise Lost*, he differs sharply from the republicans when it comes to the nature of the human subject that experiences history; the importance of ancient Greek and Roman political, social, and military history; the importance of the history of Israel; the causes of this experience; the overall shape of this experience; the importance of individuals in defining this shape; and the meaning and value of history. This fact has far-reaching consequences for the way in which Milton's poem is related to republicanism, at least where republicanism is understood as a tradition of thought running from Aristotle to Machiavelli. For, as we have seen, most of the major texts in this tradition are either historical narratives or commentaries on them, and it may therefore reasonably be argued, as it has been by several scholars, that rather than being a tradition of political thought, republicanism is essentially a tradition of historiography. But if we continue to think of republicanism as a tradition of political thought, it seems clear that one of its chief elements is an understanding of human experience over time. Once republicanism is understood in this way, the view that a seventeenth-century author such as Milton might express his republicanism by writing and publishing an epic poem which envisions history in a way which is radically at odds with the way in which it is envisioned by the republicans and which openly rejects many of the premises and values of republican historiography clearly stands in need of revision. On the basis of a more comprehensive understanding of republican tradition and a fair reading of the way in which Milton represents history in *Paradise Lost*, we must say that Milton not only departs from but openly repudiates a major aspect of this tradition.

This means that in this poem Milton departs from the approach to history that prevails in much of the prose, for this approach is very much in line with that of the republicans. Let us first of all bear in mind the basic fact that British and ancient Graeco-Roman history are here major subjects. Thus, in *Areopagitica*, Milton begins his argument for unlicensed printing in England by recalling the freedom of speech and publication that was enjoyed by citizens in ancient Athenian, Spartan,

⁵⁰ See Trompf, *Idea of Historical Recurrence in Western Thought*.

and Roman society.⁵¹ In *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, Milton cites not just Old Testament history but also ‘examples’ from the histories of the ‘Greeks and Romans’ and ‘the people of Britain’ in order to make his case for the regicide.⁵² In *Eikonoklastes*, writing with the primary aim of refuting the ‘missayings’ of *Eikon Basilike*, Milton not only cites ancient heathen history and comments on aspects of British history based on ‘ancient Statute’ and ‘our ancient Law Books’, but also recounts the minutiae of British military and political history during the 1640s.⁵³ In the first *Defence*, ancient Graeco-Roman history, alongside Old Testament history, continues to feature prominently, and Milton again brings ‘forward from our records examples which, although they are few from many indeed, yet, they are such as will establish it clearly enough that the English recently judged their king according to the laws and institutes and also the custom of their ancestors’.⁵⁴ In the second *Defence*, he continues to find useful ‘those illustrious Greeks and Romans’ who drove out tyrants, and he goes over much of the recent history of England he covered in *Eikonoklastes*, this time with the aim of refuting the charges made against him and the regicides by Pierre Du Moulin in *Regii Sanguinis Clamor ad Coelum* (*The Cry of the Royal Blood to Heaven* (1652)).⁵⁵ In *The Ready and Easy Way*, Milton argues against restoration by yet again recounting how the English had ‘prosperously fought for, gained, and many years possessed’ their liberty and religion, and citing the examples of ancient Athens, Sparta, and Rome — as well as Israel — as supporting evidence.⁵⁶ Finally, one of the many things that qualifies *The History of Britain* as an instance of what von Maltzahn calls ‘republican historiography’⁵⁷ is simply that it is a patriotic, though often highly critical, account of the military and political history of the author’s own country which is assessed in light of the ancient Graeco-Roman experience and which is heavily *reliant* upon ancient Graeco-Roman historians such as Julius Caesar, Suetonius, Tacitus, Cassius Dio, and Plutarch. As Milton observes at the opening of Book II, there were so many prudent ‘Writers, which those two, the civilest, and the wisest of *European Nations*, both *Italy* and *Greece*, afforded to the actions of that Puissant City’ —

⁵¹ *Areopagitica*, pp. 720–24.

⁵² *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, pp. 17, 22.

⁵³ *Eikonoklastes*, pp. 342, 399, 402.

⁵⁴ *A Defence of the People of England*, p. 209.

⁵⁵ *Second Defence of the English People*, p. 550.

⁵⁶ *The Ready and Easy Way*, p. 883.

⁵⁷ Von Maltzahn, *Milton’s ‘History of Britain’*, p. 72.

Rome — that he can cover more than the first hundred years of British history after the Roman invasion in 53 BC simply by following those writers and, so, ‘without much labour’.⁵⁸ Even allowing for the topical references hunted down in the final books by historicist critics, there is nothing comparable in the epic to the direct and on some occasions comprehensive treatment of ancient Graeco-Roman and British history we find in these prose works.

In the major political prose of the 1640s and 1650s, Milton also adopts broadly republican criteria for identifying what is worthy of record: he focuses on socio-political and military events of ancient and modern nations, his own in particular, and grants special attention to acts of violence committed by men in the name of civil liberty and justice. Ehud slaying Eglon in the latter’s own house; Lucius Junius Brutus expelling the Tarquins; the Romans flinging Manlius Capitolinus from the Capitol; Cicero and the Romans putting to death Catiline and his co-conspirators; Brutus and Cassius slaying Caesar; Cicero and the Romans opposing Antony; the Roundheads defeating the Cavaliers at Naseby and Marston Moor; above all, the English executing Charles I — these are some of the more prominent events in the regicide tracts. Similarly, when he narrates the history of his own country in *The History of Britain*, Milton focuses almost entirely on military and political events. Acts of patience and heroic martyrdom unsung by ancient and modern historians for the most part remain unsung in Milton’s own historical writings. Certainly the historical consciousness expressed in the regicide tracts differs from that of the republicans in that it is so strongly informed by an understanding of Israel as the chosen nation, and the view that the Christian God in some sense governs human experience in its entirety. Indeed, Milton on occasion identifies God as the agent of the deeds with which he is concerned: ‘but why do I proclaim these deeds as done by the people’, Milton asks at the opening of the first *Defence*, ‘when they almost speak out for themselves, and bear witness everywhere to the presence of God?’⁵⁹ But neither the political prose nor *The History of Britain* includes representations of supernatural beings — such as Satan, Sin, Death, and the host of fallen angels who become devils in this world — as agents that directly impinge upon the course of human experience over time. And the view that history is essentially a matter of supernal grace contending with the sinfulness of men does not seem a fair generalization to make in light of human experience as it is recorded by Milton in these works.

⁵⁸ *The History of Britain*, p. 39.

⁵⁹ *A Defence of the People of England*, p. 52.

In addition, though Milton in the major political prose sees human history as something that proceeds in line with a providential plan, he nevertheless strongly asserts that humans themselves are the authors of the deeds he narrates and that human history is very much a product of human decision, ethical conditioning, and action. Thus, in the first *Defence*, he claims that Salmasius 'will never have the power to stain the fame and eternal glory of the English who, with such greatness of mind as has scarcely been heard of in any record, struggled out of and overcame not only armed enemies, but the inwardly hostile — that is, superstitious — opinions of the mob, and created for themselves in general the title of Deliverers thereafter amongst all peoples, after daring, as a people, a deed which amongst other nations is thought to spring only from heroic virtue'.⁶⁰ In the second *Defence*, God favours, helps, inspires, and guides men, but it is because it is men, such as Cromwell and Bradshaw, who perform great deeds worthy of renown that Milton himself celebrates 'at least one heroic achievement of my countrymen' and aims to honour 'both the noble deeds and those who had done them, and make both deed and doers illustrious with praises that will never die'.⁶¹ By the time of *The Ready and Easy Way*, Milton is so appalled at the prospect of restoring the Stuart monarchy in part because it would be a betrayal of 'our own just and religious deeds'.⁶² And, as von Maltzahn observes, though in *The History of Britain* Milton 'often succumbed to the simpler providentialism of his sources', in the final books of this work he 'seeks more natural explanations for the national and individual good or bad fortune, and begins to posit an increasing degree of national and individual self-determination'.⁶³ It is, moreover, because Milton in these works stands in general agreement with the republicans that human history is to an important extent answerable to human action and decision that, like them, he counsels humans on how to behave and identifies important examples for them to follow. Ostentatiously modelling himself on Sallust, Cicero, Caesar, and Livy in these works, and sometimes grafting this classical persona onto that of the Old Testament prophet, Milton narrates history in a way that is generally consistent with the republicans' ascription of significant agency to men in relation to the shape of their own experience, and that militates against the epic God's imperative to all men to 'renounce / Thir own both righteous and unrighteous deeds' (III. 291–92).

⁶⁰ *A Defence of the People of England*, p. 75.

⁶¹ *Second Defence of the English People*, pp. 685–86.

⁶² *The Ready and Easy Way*, p. 883.

⁶³ Von Maltzahn, *Milton's 'History of Britain'*, pp. 84, 88.

These historiographical commitments underpinning the political prose, moreover, result in a vision of history at large that is in many important respects different from the general vision of history in the epic. The references to the Old and New Testaments that pervade this writing do keep the broad parameters of a Christian vision of history within view. But the excited, optimistic vision of England as the new Zion which strongly informs the political prose is nowhere to be found in the epic.⁶⁴ Neither does the poem encourage us to think of Milton's nation as a new Rome in the west as this prose, by way of a vast series of parallels explicitly drawn between ancient Rome and seventeenth-century England, does. In *Paradise Lost*, England simply does not figure in a significant way in the grand scheme of things as it often does in *Areopagitica*, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, *Eikonoklastes*, and the two *Defences*. The general conception of human history in terms of banishment and punishment for the fall and trial for the afterlife which is emphasized in the final books is also relatively understated and for the most part barely visible in this writing. And because Milton generally eschews eschatological considerations in the extensive historical narratives that permeate these works, the overall vision of history presented by them is much less informed by a sense of those events described in Revelation which, according to the typological vision of history in the epic, are in some sense omnipresent and which will *really* fulfill all types and figures of history and bring human experience as we know it to an end. Indeed, the conspicuous sparseness of references to the last days in these works, combined with the powerful and explicit commitment to the norms of ancient Roman historiography and the definition of immortality in terms of the praise of men, gives the impression that the 'by no means commonplace events' with which Milton is preoccupied stand in no need of the second coming for meaning.⁶⁵ Neither, in *The History of Britain*, does Milton assess the history of his own nation during its first millennium from the perspective of the last days. In

⁶⁴ See Paul Stevens, 'Milton's Janus-faced Nationalism: Soliloquy, Subject, and the Modern Nation State', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 100 (2001), 247–68; Lim, *John Milton, Radical Politics, and Biblical Republicanism*, p. 17.

⁶⁵ *Second Defence of the English People*, p. 684. Attempting to justify the claim that Milton's 'millenarianism' is an important element in everything he wrote, Lewalski cites three passages from the major political prose, and Revard cites one. See Barbara Lewalski, 'Milton and the Millennium', in *Milton and the Ends of Time*, ed. by Cummins, pp. 13–28; Revard, 'Milton and Millenarianism'. But, as Janel Mueller points out, millenarianism is a dominant force in earlier prose works, such as *Of Reformation*. See her 'Embodying Glory: The Apocalyptic Strain in Milton's *Of Reformation*', in *Politics, Poetics, and Hermeneutics in Milton's Prose*, ed. by Loewenstein and Turner, pp. 9–40.

Areopagitica, the regicide tracts, and *The History of Britain*, he commonly writes as though, even if it is overseen in some way by God, history is an open-ended affair in which 'nation presses upon nation, or the sounder part of a nation overthrows the more corrupt'.⁶⁶ And as Loewenstein observes of the second *Defence*, 'the opportunity for doing the greatest deeds [...] still lies before Milton's countrymen: the mythopoetic rhetor has interpreted the story of his culture in epic terms, but that story is ongoing, open-ended, and yet to be completed'.⁶⁷ Thus, when he does look to the future of mankind in the regicide tracts, he usually describes not the apocalypse, but 'ages' and 'posterity' acknowledging, admiring, judging, and imitating the deeds to which he has built a monument — though he is also acutely aware of the possibility that his countrymen will fail to capitalize on these deeds and that posterity will ultimately pass a negative judgement upon the English commonwealth. In any event, Milton writes in *Areopagitica*, the regicide tracts, and *The History of Britain* as though the rise and fall of nations, especially his own, have a value and significance that are independent of the Eschaton.

The vision of history Milton presents in his epic thus also differs in some ways from the major political prose on the issue of the meaning and value of the past. For in this prose, especially the *Defences*, Milton treats the human past as matter to be shaped and exploited by the orator with the aim of performing speech acts such as praising his own people and nation; chastising his people for their failures; ridiculing and excoriating his enemies; justifying tyrannicide; refuting charges leveled against him and his nation; persuading military commanders, rulers, and peoples at large to make particular decisions in matters of national importance; educating his nation and others in virtue; and celebrating and praising *oneself*, for, as Milton asks at the opening of the second *Defence*, 'who does not consider the glorious achievements of his country as his own?'.⁶⁸ These speech acts thus also include, as Paul Stevens argues, 'the act of national definition',⁶⁹ which is to say the

⁶⁶ *Second Defence of the English People*, p. 681.

⁶⁷ Loewenstein, 'Milton and the Poetics of Defense', p. 188.

⁶⁸ *Second Defence of the English People*, p. 550. For further observations on the ways in which Milton follows ancient Roman oratory, satire, and historiography in the first *Defence*, see John Hale, *Milton's Languages: The Impact of Multilingualism on Style* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 93–102; Hale, 'Milton and the Rationale of Insulting', in *Milton and Heresy*, ed. by Dobranski and Rumrich, pp. 159–75; Hale, *Milton's Cambridge Latin: Performing in the Genres 1625–1632* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2005), pp. 107–21.

⁶⁹ Stevens, 'Milton's Janus-faced Nationalism', p. 268.

acts of *defining* a national English identity, expressing a love for that identity and its geographical site, asserting the superiority of that identity over others, and encouraging others to respect and to love it. In addition, while the educational agenda of *Areopagitica*, the regicide tracts, and *The History of Britain* certainly includes the aim of inculcating a proper religious faith, there is a far weaker commitment here to the Pauline virtues of patience, hope, and charity and a far stronger commitment to the Ciceronian virtues — especially justice, prudence, patriotism, and a love of liberty — than there is in the epic. For example, whereas in the epic Milton affirms ‘the better fortitude / Of Patience and Heroic Martyrdom’ (IX. 31–32), in *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* he affirms ‘a better fortitude, to dare execute highest Justice on them that shall by force of Armes endeavour the oppressing and bereaving of Religion and [...] liberty at home’.⁷⁰ Similarly, the wisdom we are to derive from Milton’s prose histories contains a much greater quota of Machiavellian wisdom about war and politics, which Milton had noted in his commonplace book,⁷¹ than does the wisdom Michael wishes us to derive from his survey of world history. This is all consistent with the fact that the primary ‘examples’ which are furnished by history as Milton narrates it in *Areopagitica* and the regicide tracts and which he presents with the aim of inspiring posterity to emulate them are not Jesus and the apostles, but ‘the old and elegant humanity of Greece’ (as he puts it in *Areopagitica*),⁷² ancient Greek, Roman, and Hebrew tyrannicides, and the English parliamentarians and tyrannicides.

Since Milton’s major political prose is in keeping with the ancient republican commitment to the orator as historian, it is also in keeping with the historiography of the ancient epic poets. As he himself observes at the conclusion of the second *Defence*,

just as the epic poet, if he is scrupulous and disinclined to break the rules, undertakes to extol, not the whole life of the hero whom he proposes to celebrate in his verse, but usually one event of his life (the exploits of Achilles at Troy, let us say, or the return of Ulysses, or the arrival of Aeneas in Italy) and passes over the rest, so let it suffice me too, as my duty or

⁷⁰ *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, p. 33.

⁷¹ For Milton’s entries from Machiavelli’s *Art of War* and *Discourses* in his commonplace book, see *Commonplace Book*, with translations, preface, and notes by Mohl, pp. 414–15, 421, 443, 456, 475–77, 495–96, 498–99, 504–05. It seems that the two entries from the *Art of War* date from the early 1640s, while those from the *Discourses* were entered by amanuenses from 1651 to 1652. See Mohl’s notes, and Maurice Kelley, ‘Milton and Machiavelli’s *Discorsi*’, *Studies in Bibliography*, 4 (1951), 123–28.

⁷² *Areopagitica*, p. 719.

my excuse, to have celebrated at least one heroic achievement of my countrymen. The rest I omit. Who could extol all the achievements of an entire nation?⁷³

Here Milton explicitly aligns the approach he takes to the past in the *Defences* with the kind of historical writing he finds in the traditional national epic that he at one time had planned on writing but that he explicitly renounces in *Paradise Lost*. As von Maltzahn observes, by 1658, when he probably began to compose the poem in earnest, Milton felt that the 'patriotic republican historiography' governing the *Defences* and *The History of Britain* 'seemed to belong to the past. Hitherto he had sought to defend his own nation, the ultimate concern of his earlier public references to history, but he now planned still greater things on behalf of all Christians. That plan demanded 'another kind of historiography altogether'.⁷⁴

⁷³ *Second Defence of the English People*, p. 685.

⁷⁴ Von Maltzahn, *Milton's 'History of Britain'*, pp. 72–73, 223. On the 'contrasting methods of literary instruction' in *Paradise Lost* and *The History of Britain*, see also Worden, *Literature and Politics in Cromwellian England*, pp. 50–52, 390. Worden justifies his point by observing the austere, abstemious style of the *History* and the inspired, ornate style of the epic. But the contrast is not so sharp since, as many have observed and complained, Milton adopts an austere style in the final books of *Paradise Lost*. In addition, at the opening of *The History of Britain*, Milton explicitly affirms the idea that British history is properly appropriated by poets and orators: though conceding they might be fabulous, he decides to retell the 'reputed Tales' about early Britain 'be it for nothing else but in favour of our English Poets, and Rhetoricians, who by thir Art will know, how to use them judiciously' (p. 3).

On Milton's renunciation of the patriotic, national epic he had earlier considered, see Mackenzie Ross, *Milton's Royalism*, pp. 75–91; Steadman, *Milton and the Renaissance Hero*, p. 196; Hill, *Milton and the English Revolution*, pp. 360–65; Christopher Kendrick, *Milton: A Study in Ideology and Form* (New York: Methuen, 1986), pp. 90–94; Andrew Barnaby, "'Another Rome in the West'? Milton and the Imperial Republic, 1654–1670", *Milton Studies*, 30 (1993), 67–84; Anne-Julia Zwierlein, 'Pandemonic Panoramas: Surveying Milton's "Vain Empires" in the Long Eighteenth Century', in *Milton and the Terms of Liberty*, ed. by Parry and Raymond, pp. 191–214.

CONCLUSION

Christianity is a system, a consistently thought out and *complete* view of things.

Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*

Our main concern has been to achieve a better appreciation of Milton's poem *Paradise Lost* by understanding how it is related to the republican tradition of political thought. In order to understand this relationship, we felt it was necessary to establish a description of this tradition and to provide an account of why the use of the term 'tradition' is warranted to describe the writings and thought of a series of authors from Aristotle to Machiavelli. On the basis of observations about both primary texts and the ways in which several leading historians of political thought have gone about doing this, we have presented an account that consists of descriptions of how various authors think about not just forms of government, but also human nature, virtue, civil liberty, and history. And on the basis of all of these descriptions, we can now see that it is reasonable and fruitful to think of republican tradition as a family. Membership in this family is determined by the degree of resemblance figures bear to each other, where resemblance is a function of the possession of particular traits, and where traits are defined in terms of positions on each of these five issues.¹

Standing back from the members we have considered, and attempting to identify the particular positions that constitute the defining traits of the family, we can say that the position on human nature is that it is a composite of, on the one hand,

¹ For the suggestion that we think of republican tradition in terms of family resemblance, see Nelson, *Greek Tradition in Republican Thought*, p. 18. Jonathan Scott's treatment of English republicanism in terms of a 'constellation of ideas' — ideas about rebellion, constitutions, liberty, virtue, history, and empire — is also conducive to this way of thinking about the tradition.

reason, and on the other, appetite and passion. This nature is seen to have an end in the very general sense that it exists for the sake of something and that a particular way of life is proper to it. That for the sake of which man exists, that which is proper to it, is seen to be a way of life in this world that is grounded in reason's control over and direction of passion and appetite. This view of the end of man is grounded mainly in a view of the quality of its components, the quality of all natural and supernatural agents, and the relationship between human nature and all other natural and supernatural agents. More specifically, this conception of the end of man is grounded in the views that reason is the best part of human nature, that reason is something that no other animal has but that the gods have, and that a human life grounded in the exercise of reason and its government of passion and appetite constitutes the full development and perfection of that nature as a whole. However, the praise of good men which one properly earns by living in this way is also seen by republicans to be a significant component of that for the sake of which humans should live. While the effective performance of a wide range of activities may qualify as such a way of life, carrying out the duties of citizenship — which include serving in the military, participating in government, administering justice, and obeying just government — is seen as an, if not the, embodiment of this life. Though important because it provides the necessities of life, manual labour is either of no special importance in relation to the ends of man or inimical to their achievement and therefore best left for slaves, helots, or those who are incapable of achieving them. Human nature is either neutral in relation to these ends (but well adapted to develop those qualities which allow it to achieve them) or actively disposed towards achieving them. A precondition for the comprehensive achievement of these ends is membership in a political society, where such a society is taken to be a partnership of humans living under laws they set for themselves with the aim of serving, at least in part, the welfare of all partners.

Many members of the republican family think of virtue in terms of conditions and attributes which are necessary in order for humans to achieve their ends. The general interior condition which enables humans to achieve their ends is one in which their reason or something comparable to it governs their appetites and passions; the most important particular attributes which enable them to do so are wisdom, justice, courage, temperance, and patriotism. Justice is of exceptional importance because it is the principle of order in political societies, and membership in a political society is necessary to the fulfilment of our ends. But it is also important because, understood as the quality out of which we obey civil law, it is the quality out of which we exercise all other virtues (since the civil law in authentic political societies commands us to exercise all other virtues and forbids us to exercise the

vices). Given that the exercise and development of reason's control over passion and appetite is the end of man, and given that virtue is defined in terms of reason's control of passion and appetite, the end of man is the life of virtue. Strictly speaking, one cannot live this life on one's own; living the life of virtue to the full is something one can do only with others. The most effective means of instilling virtue in people are the eloquence of wise orators, the creation and enforcement of reasonable civil law, and educational and religious institutions (though these institutions are usually seen as just part of what is called for by civil law). Rulers of political societies, moreover, are both obliged and entitled to cultivate virtue in the people by these means. Humans may thus make themselves virtuous and, indeed, bring themselves through their own efforts into what for them is a state of perfection.

On the basis of our consideration of some of the figures who have been taken to be in the family, we can also see that the defining feature concerning forms of government is not the repudiation of the rule of the one and the assertion of rule by the few or the many. It is an antiformalism according to which the best form of government for any particular society at any particular time will be one of the three pure forms, or a mixture of them, where a pure form of government is one that is just, lawful, and serves the common good. Monarchy is seen to be one of the three pure forms. Whether it or another form is best for any particular political society at any given time will depend upon a wide range of circumstances both within and outside that society at that time. Monarchy, or something close to it, is seen to be preferable to the other two in many situations: where the one is of outstanding virtue; where the people are bellicose and crude (as the first Romans were) and need to be civilized; where the political society faces a crisis; where the laws, institutions, and customs of a political society are to be founded or refounded; where the people and their governors have become corrupt and the one wishes to establish or re-establish a virtuous political society. The just and lawful rule of the one, or 'monarchy' as it is also sometimes called, is sometimes associated with the curtailment or absence of civil liberty, but that association is highly unstable. For citizens living under a mixed constitution which, by definition, makes a place for a king, are seen to enjoy civil liberty. In discussions of ancient Rome, monarchy is often seen to be a form under which Roman citizens enjoyed some civil liberties. And there is a widespread perception that, as far as civil liberty for the plebeians of Rome is concerned, the crucial constitutional reform was not the move from rule by monarch to rule by consul and senator in 509, but the move from rule by consul and senator to rule by consul, senator, and tribune which occurred in 494 in the wake of the First Secession of the Plebs. The proposition implied by this view is that it is not a non-monarchical form of government, but a tribunate or something

comparable to it (such as the ephorate in Sparta) that is the *constitutional* safeguard of civil liberty for the populace of any given political society. Finally, republican constitutional antiformalism is qualified by the affirmation of one particular form, the mixed constitution. This affirmation is based mainly on the view that the constitutions of both ancient Sparta and ancient republican Rome were mixed, and that this fact was to an important extent responsible for what are seen to be the exceptional achievements of these ancient political societies: a free political society, a free and virtuous citizenry, socio-political stability, an efficient military, and empire (in the case of Rome).

On the contentious issue of civil liberty, the distinguishing features are positions on the nature of this kind of liberty and the relative importance and value of specific civil liberties. The view that the republicans always affirm one distinct concept of liberty cannot survive observation of the complex and variegated usage of terms such as *exousia*, *eleutheros*, *doulos*, *libertas*, *servitus*, *imperium*, *libertà*, *schiavo*, *imperio*, and *dominio* in the texts we have considered. One of the main ways in which civil liberty is understood is in terms of the existence of rights that are defined and protected by civil law, a view which is consistent with the conceptualization of liberty as non-domination. But the republicans also understand civil liberty in terms of the absence of actual constraints placed by rulers on the activities of those they rule, a view that is consistent with the conceptualization of liberty as non-interference. The slave/freeman opposition notwithstanding, civil liberty is commonly seen not as an all or nothing affair, but something of which a member of a political society may have more or less. This way of understanding civil liberty is consistent with the view that one way of maintaining and exercising power over individuals and peoples is by granting them *some* civil liberties. Civil law is seen as both something that restricts civil liberty (in that it can place constraints on and interfere with the activities of citizens) and something that makes it possible (in that it defines and protects civil rights). Though they tend to see virtue as a product of good legislation, the republicans also see virtue as a precondition for the existence of those civil liberties that are defined by civil law. Rulers are seen rightly to place extensive constraints on citizens' religious belief and practice. This is because rulers of political societies rightly inculcate virtue in the members of those societies, the creation and enforcement of civil law is an effective and legitimate means of doing so, and the religious beliefs and practices of those members significantly affect their virtue. The absence of constraints imposed by rulers of political societies on members' participation in legislating and administering justice is of great importance and value to those members and their societies because of the special status such participation is seen to have in relation to what, for animals of this

kind, is the end of existence. Rather than expressing a single ideal of civil liberty, the republicans take the view that the extent of civil liberty that ought to be enjoyed by the members of any given political society will depend upon the ambitions of that society and the kind of constitution which is most suitable for it.

Finally, the privileged place of military and political activity in the republicans' understanding of virtue, civil liberty, and the ends of man results in their understanding of history (or that which is worthy of historical record) mainly in terms of military and political events. History according to the republicans is thus a matter of military and diplomatic engagements between political societies; the progression of particular political societies through various states of health and sickness, dominance and servitude, virtue and corruption; and the progression of particular political societies through various forms of government, a progression which may be interrupted and forestalled by natural cataclysms and the establishment of mixed constitutions. There is also a marked concern with those individuals — Hannibal and Scipio, Cicero and Jugurtha — who are seen to play major roles in these military and political events. While many of these events and processes are seen to be natural, none of them is seen to be part of a history of mankind that is leading up to some conclusion or event that would make sense of it all. And while there is an acknowledgement of supernatural forces, such as Fortune, at work in them, the human experience is seen to be largely the work of humans. Some particular political societies, such as ancient Sparta and Rome, are, however, seen to be of exceptional importance or value both to those humans who existed when they did and to humans of all places and ages. Since these particular political societies are seen to have achieved the most important things in human life, they are taken to be valuable sources of wisdom, mainly about war and politics, which others may use to do the same. The experiences of ancient political societies, and skilful descriptions of them, are also seen to provide examples of virtuous behaviour which can *inspire* not just other members of those societies, but also those who are not members to imitate them. Finally, the value of history understood in this way is also seen to derive from the way it provides material to orators which they can use to persuade, to counsel, to praise, to vituperate, and to inculcate virtue in fellow citizens.

As we may identify the family to which individuals belong, and the closeness of their relation to that family, on grounds of their possession of one or more of a set of particular traits, so we may reasonably identify the tradition to which authors belong, and the closeness of their relation to that tradition, on grounds of their assertion of one or more of these propositions about these five main subjects. Those authors who espouse many of these views on these five subjects are central to the tradition and, on the family resemblance model, are immediate family; those

who espouse few of them are more distant relatives; those who espouse none of them are outside the family. An advantage of thinking of republican tradition in this way, I suggest, lies, first of all, in that it permits us to recognize important ways in which particular thinkers, such as Machiavelli, belong to and participate in the tradition but still to maintain a sensitivity to the ways in which they depart from it, reject it, and belong to other traditions. Thus we can see that Machiavelli participates in the tradition by virtue of some of his views on forms of government, civil liberty, and history while seeing that he departs from the tradition, or at least introduces strange new blood to the republican family, by virtue of some of his views on human nature and virtue. It also permits us to speak of traditions of political thought which are different from each other while recognizing that the boundaries between them are not sharply drawn and that they may have some important things in common, a point which has been made recently by Vickie Sullivan, Jonathan Scott, and others.² In addition, because this conception of republican tradition, unlike most others, does not grant priority to any one particular trait but regards views on each of the five main topics as being of equal importance, it does not see the tradition as having a 'core' or 'heart' of any kind. This conception can thus also accommodate a proposition which, as we have seen, some of the strongest scholarship on the tradition explicitly states or implies: it may be just as reasonable to think of republicanism as a tradition of ethical or historical thought, one which has implications for how political societies behave and ought to be organized, as it is to think of it as a tradition of political thought which has implications for our moral and historical condition.

But our observations of how some of the republicans think about these five main issues also suggest that to conceive of republican tradition solely in terms of sets of interrelated propositions and ideas which are more or less shared by various authors over time would be to neglect how it is also defined by the different ways in which these authors use and transform those propositions and ideas — and particular vocabularies — to achieve specific ends and to serve specific interests within particular socio-political situations. The accounts of the tradition provided by Pocock, Skinner, Worden, and Scott are distinguished in part because they attend to this dimension of the tradition, though these scholars differ considerably from each other in their delineations of both the circumstances of writing and the ways in which the republicans respond to them. In observing how each figure treats the

² Sullivan, *Machiavelli, Hobbes, and the Formation of a Liberal Republicanism*; Scott, *Commonwealth Principles*; Charles Larmore, 'Liberal and Republican Conceptions of Freedom', in *Republicanism: History, Theory and Practice*, ed. by Weinstock and Nadeau, pp. 96–119.

main issues, we have thus also taken into account, albeit in ad hoc fashion, the historicization of republican ideas and vocabularies which has been achieved by these and other scholars, and on occasion attempted to contribute to it. By attending to some of the specific conditions in which Cicero and Sallust were writing and their political allegiances under these conditions, for example, we have seen that they use terms such as *libertas* and *mos maiorum* in very different ways with the aim of achieving very different socio-political outcomes. We have seen, that is, that though some authors may participate in the same tradition of thought and even exist within the same political society, they may have very different ideological intentions and commitments.

Finally, our observations show that the notions of family resemblance and historicization are still inadequate to capture one further important dimension of what many of us mean when we are speaking and thinking of republican tradition: the ways in which an author comes to share some traits, but not others, with earlier authors as a result of reading and interpreting their writings. For whereas sons and daughters physically and genetically resemble and differ from their parents through no action of their own, members of traditions often, though not necessarily, resemble and differ from older members of those traditions at least in part by virtue of their own acts of reading and interpreting the works of those members. Machiavelli, for example, does not just happen both to resemble and to differ from Cicero and Sallust; he does so, in part, on the basis of a complex engagement with their writings, an engagement he describes when, in the famous letter he wrote to his friend Vettori, he recounts his typical day once he had been excluded from public life on the occasion of the restoration of the Medici:

When evening comes I return home and go into my study, and at the door I take off my daytime dress covered in mud and dirt, and put on royal and curial robes; and then decently attired I enter the courts of the ancients, where affectionately greeted by them, I partake of that food which is mine alone and for which I was born; where I am not ashamed to talk with them and I inquire the reasons of their actions; and they out of their human kindness answer me, and for four hours at a stretch I feel no worry of any kind; I forget all my troubles, I am not afraid of poverty or of death. I give myself up entirely to them. And because Dante says that understanding does not constitute knowledge unless it is retained in the memory, I have composed a short work *de Principatibus*.³

Given such an account of how one of the principal works of the tradition was produced, it seems important, for anyone who is attempting to understand the

³ Quoted in Bernard Crick, 'Introduction', in *Discourses*, trans. by Walker with revisions by Brian Richardson, pp. 68–69.

tradition, to register ways in which authors and texts influence and respond to each other. Taking into account some of the extensive scholarship that has already been devoted to this aspect of the tradition, as well as forms of allusion and intertextuality displayed by the primary texts themselves, we have also seen how what we take to be the tradition comes into being through those acts of conversation, surrender, memory, obedience — and consumption — to which Machiavelli refers.

This understanding of the tradition is, however, far from comprehensive. The major omission in our discussion is that of the medieval political thinkers such as Marsilius of Padua and Nicholas of Cusa who, in light of the work of Quentin Skinner, Antony Black, Cary Nederman, and James Blythe, are now widely seen as major figures in republican tradition who were overlooked by Baron and Pocock.⁴ The main reasons for this omission are that a consideration of them would have expanded an already lengthy account of the tradition, these figures do not appear to me to have been so important to Milton, and they do not figure in the going interpretation of Milton's republicanism. A more thorough account would also include treatments of some of the other ancients mentioned by Worden (especially Plutarch) and other Florentines, such as Guicciardini and Bruni, but, again, this would have required additional extensive discussion, and they are secondary figures in the current discussion of the politics of *Paradise Lost*. The account of republican tradition presented here is thus highly partial, but that partiality is primarily a function of a concern to respond to the preoccupations of the current discussion, and to register Milton's departures from the classical and Machiavellian moments of the tradition which he found so compelling and useful in relation to the ends he pursued in his political prose.

* * *

It is on the basis of this description of republican tradition, in conjunction with the observations on *Paradise Lost* presented here, that we can see that the relationship between this tradition and this poem is different from that postulated by many recent discussions of the politics of Miltonic epic. The poem does, as these treatments argue, conform in some important ways with some aspects of the tradition, but often not in the ways they recognize. Milton first of all takes on board a version

⁴ See Blythe, *Ideal Government and the Mixed Constitution*; Blythe, "'Civic Humanism'" and Medieval Political Thought'; Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978); Skinner, 'Rediscovery of Republican Values'; Skinner, 'Republican Virtues in an Age of Princes'; Antony Black, 'Christianity and Republicanism: From St. Cyprian to Rousseau', *American Political Science Review*, 91 (1997), 647–56; Nederman, *Medieval Aristotelianism and its Limits*; Nederman, 'Rhetoric, Reason, and Republic'.

of the ancient Graeco-Roman conception of the human animal as one that is made up of a rational part and an irrational part, the latter of which is defined in terms of passion, desire, and appetite. And agreeing with the ancients' judgement that the rational part is the best part of man, the poem, like them, also asserts that it is natural for this rational part to govern the passions and appetites and, indeed, the person. Like the ancients, moreover, Milton in this poem associates moral virtue with this natural condition of the inner man and those actions that move out of it. While pretty much all of the critics who discuss the politics of *Paradise Lost* would see the poem's antiformalism in constitutional matters (according to which the rule of the one may in some circumstances be a legitimate form of government for humans) as something that seriously compromises its republican credentials, this aspect of the poem in fact aligns it with an important dimension of republican tradition. Similarly, while many critics would see the poem's suggestion that rational agents may be free under just and rational princes and kings as something that compromises its republican credentials, this suggestion is in fact consistent with some discussions of civil liberty in Aristotle, the Romans, and Machiavelli. Finally, like many of the republicans, Milton in this poem thinks of human history as a source of wisdom which also provides inspiring examples to humans regarding how to conduct their lives. This wisdom, moreover, has some things in common with republican understandings of tyranny, virtue, and the relationship between virtue and civil liberty.

But (to stay with the metaphor) these forms of agreement qualify the poem as merely a distant relative in the republican family at best, and a hostile one at that. For the heterodox Protestant world-view assumed by Milton in this poem is the basis for both departures from and militant repudiations of republican anthropological, ethical, educational, constitutional, legal, and historical thought. Though on some occasions (such as his discussion of religious toleration in Book XII) he resorts to a dualistic vocabulary to discuss human nature,⁵ on others he explicitly asserts a monistic ontology which is at odds with the dualistic interpretation of man's composite human nature that prevails in Cicero, Sallust, and Machiavelli. In addition, Milton's vision of human nature as part of God's creation differs from the vision or assumption of the naturalistic origins of man in the republicans (though Cicero sometimes speaks of man as the creature of Jupiter and God). Understanding human nature as God's work, Milton sees it as something that is intended by its creator to exist in a certain way and to achieve certain things: he

⁵ See Walker, 'Milton's Dualistic Theory of Limited Religious Toleration'.

asserts throughout the poem that God made man *to* do certain things and *for* certain things. Unlike the republicans, Milton defines the end of man, that mode of existence which is proper to it and which it ought to aim at, essentially in terms of this divine intention: God's 'sovrain will' is, as Adam observes, 'the end / Of what we are' (VII. 79–80). Among the things that God wills for his creature Man is that he be happy, that he refrain from eating of the Tree of Knowledge, that he procreate, that he rule the animals, and that he serve him out of care to please him. As a composite of reason, passion, and appetite, human nature is made by God in such a way that it is free and, indeed, disposed to do these things with ease and delight.

Unlike the republicans, Milton understands the end of the human animal to undergo a radical change at a particular moment of its existence. For, as a result of choosing to act in a way that violates God's intention for him when he made him, mankind commits a 'crime' against God which results in a radical transformation of the 'sovrain will' for man. That new will is neither that man live the life of the philosopher, nor that he be a statesman and law-abiding citizen, but that he suffer, deteriorate, die, accept divine grace when offered, repent, pray, perform works of faith and charity, and achieve salvation. The end of human nature as the republicans and we know it is thus suffering, deterioration, death, acceptance of grace, repenting, praying, performing works of faith and charity, and, ultimately, bliss in the world to come. Unlike the republicans, Milton also understands human nature itself to have undergone a radical change, one that in some ways made it suitable for its new ends. For as a result of this crime, human nature became depraved and infected by sin and, therefore, actively disposed to the suffering and dying that God out of justice wills for it. Thus whereas the republicans see physiological decay and dying as essentially amoral processes which humans and other animals undergo simply because they are natural, as opposed to supernatural, organisms, Milton in this poem sees them as profound, permanent affronts to human dignity, and forms of punishment which derive directly from both a defective nature and a supernatural agent bent on justice. Death, however, also derives from divine mercy, since it is the 'final remedy' to a 'woe' which, without death, would be eternal (XI. 60–62). The depravity which is inherent to human nature is also counteracted by God in such a way as to render it capable of performing those 'virtuous' deeds which are also part of man's end in this world and which qualify him for the 'happy end' of salvation. While legislating and administering justice may qualify as such deeds, they are not essential, for it is by means of 'small' things and 'things deem'd weak' that, as the life of the Son shows and as Adam finally understands, we may overcome evil and subvert the worldly strong (XII. 566–69). Finally, unlike the republicans, Milton in this poem does not envisage the life of virtuous deeds as that

for the sake of which one lives, and that in which we are to take pride. We live for the sake of a second life, and we renounce both our righteous and our unrighteous deeds, though Milton himself seems to have had some difficulty in managing this.

Though virtue for Milton's humans is still grounded in the exercise of reason, it is different from republican virtue in that reason is seen to dictate something different from what the ancients felt it dictated: belief in the Christian God, acceptance of divine grace when offered, suffering and dying in a particular way, works of faith. While virtuous action may involve bearing arms and carrying out duties of juridical and legislative office, it certainly need not, and it is difficult to see how Adam's commitment to subverting worldly strength and wisdom through meekness and things deemed weak is consistent with the armed resistance to tyrants that is endorsed by the ancients and Machiavelli. Indeed, that commitment amounts to a rejection of Machiavelli's vision of the human condition and his prescription to those who wish to avoid being enslaved or destroyed by the worldly strong and wise. In addition, given the representation of Adam and Eve in paradise, God's command to fallen man to till the ground, and the positive representations of Abel and the survivors of the flood, the life of manual labour would not appear to be in any way incompatible with the life of virtue as it is for the ancients. Since the criteria in relation to which Milton identifies a quality as a virtue are different from those adopted by the ancients, his table of virtues is different as well: justice and wisdom (though radically reconceived) and temperance are still virtues, but patience, faith, hope, and charity are the cardinal virtues. Membership in political societies is not required in order to exercise them; indeed, Milton in this poem graphically represents the fact that one can lead the virtuous life entirely on one's own, though worlds judge one perverse. Judging from Milton's representation of fallen mankind, the virtues are effectively instilled by neither good schools, nor the eloquence of good men, nor well-enforced civil laws. Indeed, the poet's Pauline antinomianism militates against both the idea that rulers can and ought to make subjects virtuous by way of creating and enforcing civil law, and the understanding of the quality that disposes one to observe the civil laws of one's political society — which the ancients called 'justice' — as the supreme moral virtue. The basic idea that man is capable, through his own efforts, of cultivating virtue in himself to the point of bringing himself into a state of moral perfection is, moreover, profoundly alien to this poem. God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit instill and cultivate virtue in humans directly, or indirectly by informing human acts of hearing good preaching and reading Scripture and good poems such as *Paradise Lost*.

Though Milton's poem is consistent with the republicans' view that monarchy is a pure form of government under which citizens are free, it departs from them

in that it shows little interest in the mixed constitution and the socio-political stability and longevity of political societies which this constitution was felt to promote. It is also important to see that the antiformalism Milton shares with the republicans on this matter is entirely consistent with the antiformalism on all matters which he and many of his allies including Cromwell felt followed from true Protestant faith. Milton in this poem, moreover, displays no interest in the Roman tribunate or the Spartan ephorate which were of such great importance to republican discussions of the constitutional safeguards and preconditions of civil liberty for the populaces of these ancient political societies. Finally, in presenting tyranny as a form of government which God imposes on his depraved creatures in order justly to punish them, Milton departs from the prevailing republican account of tyranny as something that humans bring upon themselves.

It is mainly because Milton conceives of human nature and virtue in the way he does that he also differs in crucial respects from the republicans on the issue of civil liberty. In the final books of the poem, there is very little rights talk, and the absence of constraints imposed by government and Church on believing in and worshipping God as one sees fit emerges as a civil freedom of the greatest importance. This is because proper religious belief and worship are presented as being central to the virtuous life and the fulfilment of the ends of man. Milton might have differed from the republicans on this count but still aligned himself with them in an important respect had he expressed the view that, a principal function of government being to instill virtue, government should assume the role of promoting or even enforcing that religious belief and practice which are the foundations of virtue. But differing from the republicans on the importance of religious freedom, Milton also differs from them on the proper function of government: in this poem, he teaches that even though true religion is the foundation of moral virtue, it is not the job of government to promote true religion. Given Milton's conception of true religion as the basis of virtue, that is, his theory of religious toleration which is grounded in 'the separation of Church and state' amounts to a fundamental departure from republican views on civil liberty and the proper aims of political activity at large. Milton's teaching differs even further from these views in that it finally reduces the value of *all* civil liberties, including the freedom of religion, to human beings. This is because, ultimately, *no* civil liberty is essential to any individual's achievement of the ends of man. Indeed, even when we do not deserve to have our civil liberties denied by violent lords for having permitted passion and appetite to govern our reason and thereby delivered ourselves to a state of inner servitude, our rulers' denial of our freedoms — even our freedoms to believe and worship as we

see fit — may serve as the occasion for the suffering for truth's sake which is part of our end in this world and which may qualify us for salvation.

Finally, the vision of human history with which the poem concludes differs radically from the republican vision in that it displays little concern for the rise and fall of the great ancient pagan political societies but focuses instead on Israel. This is because the socio-political and military experience of all political societies save Israel is of little importance in relation to the collective experience of mankind and the wisdom humans need in order to live well. Rather than being seen primarily as a function of man's own efforts, and sometimes of those of gods such as Fortune, that experience is envisioned as something that is profoundly influenced by devils, angels, Sin, Death, and God. The experience of mankind from beginning to end is also envisioned as a four-stage sequence: from the moment of his creation up to the fall, mankind is happy in paradise; from the fall to the first coming mankind suffers and is given the Law; from the first to the second coming, mankind still suffers, but has been delivered from the Law to the covenant of Faith; after the second coming, faithful humans are happy on earth and then in a new heaven and earth, while unfaithful humans suffer in hell. Within this overall sequence, moreover, is a set of special events, some of which (described in the Old Testament) resemble and promise others (described in the Gospels and Revelation) which 'fulfill' them. This typological vision of history is, as Auerbach and others point out, alien to classical pagan historical consciousness. While having some things in common with the political wisdom which the republicans derived from their extensive observations on history as they understood it, the wisdom we are to derive from history is essentially the New Testament wisdom which Adam and Michael explicitly summarize and assert at the end of the poem. That wisdom, moreover, is to serve as the basis not for winning in war or swaying the world as Rome did, but for subverting the 'worldly wise' (XII. 568), if need be, and living the life of virtue as the poem defines it.

This summary makes clear that it is not the case that Milton's epic just happens to agree with the republicans on some points and disagree with them on others. It shows rather that the disagreements are fundamental and systematic. Thus, the poem's analysis of virtue differs from the republican analysis because its vision of man differs from that of the republicans. Its evaluation of civil liberty differs from the republican evaluation in part because its vision of the ends of man differs from that of the republicans. And its vision of the overall narrative shape of human experience differs from that of the republicans in part because its vision of man as a fallen creature that stands in need of salvation differs from the republican vision of man. The poem's teachings on human nature, virtue, forms of government, civil liberty, and history, that is, are in a very important sense interrelated and interdependent.

Propounding a Protestant world-view — however heretical and idiosyncratic it may be — Milton propounds a version of a consistently thought out and complete view of things, the Christian view of things, that is different from, and that was to an important extent formulated out of open opposition and hostility to, the complete views of things offered by the ancient pagan Greeks and Romans, including the classical republicans. Certainly some of the ways in which the poem adopts ancient pagan and Machiavellian views cohere with the modifications the poem introduces to the Protestant system: Milton's adoption of the ancient ideas of man as a composite of reason and passion, and of virtue as reason's government of passion and will, for example, is consistent with and dictates to some extent the poem's rationalist as opposed to voluntarist theological disposition. But these adoptions amount to accretions and innovations to a religious *system* which underlies the poem and which is in many crucial respects irreconcilable with the systems formulated by the ancients and Machiavelli.

One implication of this argument is that insofar as the current consensus on Milton's republicanism in *Paradise Lost* holds that the poem's ethico-political teachings conform with the teachings of Aristotle, Cicero, Machiavelli, and some of the other figures we have considered in some detail — and the current consensus *is* defined to a great extent by this view — that consensus is mistaken. But the argument presented here also challenges the basic understanding of the poem as an expression of Christian humanism, where Christian humanism is defined in terms of some kind of synthesis of Christian and ancient Graeco-Roman sources (on this definition, the current consensus on Milton's republicanism in *Paradise Lost* is really a version of the Christian humanist reading). Our observations challenge the Christian humanist reading of the poem by highlighting the many ways in which Milton's Protestant views on man, virtue, constitutions, civil freedom, and history are incompatible with the views taken on these issues by some of the major ancient philosophers and historians. In addition, we have seen that in *Paradise Lost*, Milton often does not *attempt* to reconcile these incompatible world-views, but on many occasions openly rejects pagan Graeco-Roman views on the basis of his commitment to heterodox Protestant views. That is to say that in this poem, Milton displays hostility towards not just pagan epic (as has been observed by many critics), but classical republicanism as well. The reading of *Paradise Lost* as a monument of Christian humanism is inadequate not because, as Strier argues, Milton is an Aristotelian masquerading as a Christian, but because he is a heterodox Protestant who has stopped trying to incorporate, or make it appear as though it is possible to incorporate, the major ancient pagan teachings about the ends of man with his religious faith.

Another implication of this argument is thus that Milton's epic is discontinuous in important ways with the major political prose. For as many scholars have recently argued, and as we have observed along the way, this prose is strongly informed by republican tradition and in many important ways conforms with it. That is to say that, in general, the prose is marked by an attempt on Milton's part to integrate, or at least to give the impression of integrating, his Protestantism with the views of Aristotle, Polybius, Cicero, Sallust, Livy, and Machiavelli. Thus, in *Of Education*, *Areopagitica*, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, *The History of Britain*, *Eikonoklastes*, the two *Defences*, and *The Ready and Easy Way*, Milton openly entertains republican ideas of the ends of man in terms of citizenship, happiness, and glory. This is one reason why, in these works, he also highlights the importance of justice and wisdom (of the Aristotelian and Ciceronian kind), courage, and patriotism as human virtues and celebrates those who exercise them. This also explains why, in the regicide tracts, Milton so stridently and proudly takes on the role of glorifier of the Englishmen who exercised these virtues by taking up arms against the king. In *The Reason of Church Government*, *Of Education*, *Areopagitica*, *The History of Britain*, and *The Ready and Easy Way*, he displays a significant affinity for the Graeco-Roman view that state schooling (regulated by civil law) and the eloquence of virtuous men are effective means of inculcating these virtues, means which are legitimately implemented by rulers. In the regicide tracts, he also shows a strong propensity to speak of civil freedom in terms of civil rights, and he writes as though the presence and exercise of such rights is of central importance to human existence. Finally, in *The History of Britain* and the regicide tracts, Milton writes history along the lines laid down by the ancients. In all of these works, he explicitly cites, and in some cases openly identifies with, Aristotle, Cicero, Sallust, Livy, and others, as though their thinking about ethics and politics is compatible with the religious faith which he also explicitly affirms. It is because in *Paradise Lost* Milton does not attempt to take on board the ancients and Machiavelli in these ways that this poem is not simply more of the same but in fact breaks with the prose in crucial respects.

It therefore also breaks in crucial respects with English republicanism, at least on some of the more comprehensive accounts of English republicanism, including Milton's contributions to it, that are currently available. According to Worden, at the 'centre' of English republicanism from 1650 to 1700 was 'a desire to learn from and to emulate the achievements of the commonwealths of classical antiquity — principally Sparta and, above all, Rome'. The English republicans found their 'principal guide' to these commonwealths in Machiavelli, and 'with few exceptions the republicans shared Machiavelli's respect for, and his belief in the autonomy of,

political activity; his conception of civic activity and participation; his concern for national glory (though not without reservations); his approach to history; his understanding of the proper relationship between politics and religion'.⁶ And while Jonathan Scott highlights the religious component in English republicanism, he, like Worden, finds that there is a concentrated and indeed successful effort to integrate, combine, synthesize, and fuse that component with commitments to the ethical and political teachings of the ancients and Machiavelli.⁷ On these descriptions of English republicanism and Milton's part in it, ones which seem reasonable, *Paradise Lost*, as a poem in which Milton draws back from and in many ways repudiates the wisdom of the ancients and Machiavelli, marks a decisive departure from central aspects of English republicanism.

But the poem differs from English republican thought on a more basic level, one which becomes clear if we bear in mind some of the *specific* things which the English republicans supported. Because there was so much difference of opinion amongst antiroyalists during the 1650s, it is difficult to determine just who should count as an English republican and just what should count as republican ideology during the decade: after Cromwell ejects the Rump in April 1653, do the English republicans include John Bradshaw, Sir Henry Vane, and the other 'commonwealthsmen' who went into opposition, or only those who, like Milton at least for a while, supported the coup and the installation of Cromwell as Protector at the end of that year? Or is there some definition of 'republican' which would allow both of these groups to qualify? If by 'English republicans' we mean those who supported the de facto governing regime of England (and its policies) from Pride's purge in 1648 up to the death of Oliver Cromwell in 1658 — a definition which would *exclude* the commonwealthsmen from the category — then many English republicans supported a governing body consisting of a parliament purged by the army — the Rump — and a military council which that parliament then appointed. English republicans such as Milton wrote and published with the aim of justifying the trial of the king by a 'kangaroo court'⁸ and his public execution that followed upon that trial. They supported the abolition of monarchy and the House of Lords in England. They supported Cromwell's use of force to squash the Levellers in 1649, as well as his policy of subjugating both Ireland and Scotland, a

⁶ Worden, 'English Republicanism', pp. 444, 464.

⁷ See Scott, *Commonwealth Principles*.

⁸ John Morrill, 'The Causes and Course of the British Civil Wars', in *Cambridge Companion to Writing of the English Revolution*, ed. by Keeble, pp. 13–31 (p. 30).

policy that resulted in the vengeful massacres of the Irish at Drogheda and Wexford in 1649, and bloody victories over the Scots at Dunbar (1650) and Worcester (1651). They supported the unification of Ireland, Scotland, and England into one commonwealth which these military victories enabled. They supported the fortification of the navy, and a foreign policy of implementing it in an aggressive pursuit of trading interests in North America, the Caribbean, and east India which led to the Anglo-Dutch war of 1652–54. Those committed to the de facto regime then found themselves bound to support the Nominated Parliament (or Barebone's Parliament) which followed upon Cromwell's dissolution of the Rump, and then two versions of a mixed constitution for England: the Instrument of Government in 1653, and the Humble Petition and Advice of 1657.⁹

In light of some of these specific acts, regimes, policies, and constitutions which English republicans (at least on one definition of the term) supported and tried to justify in various ways, do we really want to say of *Paradise Lost* that 'politically, it articulates, sometimes in necessarily covert form, the revolutionary ideology of the overthrown English republic'?¹⁰ No. Milton's oblique expression of his opposition to the Restoration in this poem does not amount to a reaffirmation of the nationalistic, imperialistic, militaristic ideology of the 1650s. The view that it does is grounded in a highly partial and sanitized version of what this ideology was and what in particular it was meant to justify. It fails to see that, according to this poem, the three kingdoms of an Atlantic archipelago are really not so important in the grand scheme of things. It fails to see that in *Paradise Lost* Milton does not cite the ancients and play fast and loose with the apostles, as he does in the prose, in order to put a good face on the English killing of king and countryman, English military coups, and the Lord Protector of England, Ireland, and Scotland.

There are thus some good reasons for claiming, as Worden does, that in *Paradise Lost*, Milton 'withdraws from politics to faith'.¹¹ If, at least, politics is taken to include the kind of *political activity* in which Milton engaged during the 1650s, then Milton's act of composing and having published his epic marks a turn away from politics. For in writing and publishing this poem, Milton was no longer writing and publishing works directly addressed to statesmen or military commanders with the intention of changing the civil laws, the constitution, or the governors of England.

⁹ For further details of what Worden refers to as these 'coups', and Milton's response to them, see Worden, *Literature and Politics in Cromwellian England*, pp. 254–61; Smith, 'Struggle for New Constitutional and Institutional Forms', pp. 16–25.

¹⁰ Thomas Corns, *Regaining 'Paradise Lost'* (London: Longman, 1994), p. viii.

¹¹ Worden, 'Milton's Republicanism and the Tyranny of Heaven', p. 244.

On this occasion he is no longer addressing from a position of public office all of Europe and the entire world with the aim of justifying a tyrannicide and changes to the regime and the constitution of England. Having not only relinquished office but also come to deplore the new political regime, Milton surely cannot be seen to be acting in the way he claims to have acted when he published *A Defence of the People of England* in 1651: 'as reason of state then demanded'.¹² He here no longer recommends 'Mediterranean political wisdom as the cure to his country's ills', and no longer looks 'to his fellow Englishmen to build "another Rome in the west"'.¹³ However, if 'politics' is taken to mean simply a general subject of writing, then Worden's dictum, which has incited so much opposition, is somewhat crude, first, because as he himself observes and as many critics have strained to point out, Milton in this poem does at least sometimes seem to wish to remind us of vocabularies and personages that are prominent in seventeenth-century socio-political English history. And at least some of these reminders give the poem a topical and antiroyalist polemical dimension, though some of the evidence provided for this argument is questionable. In addition, the poem explicitly forwards comprehensive teachings on those issues, positions on which we have taken to define republican tradition from Aristotle to Machiavelli. Given that some of the central *themes* of the poem are human nature, virtue, forms of government, civil liberty, and history, and given that these are central themes of republicans from Aristotle to Machiavelli, it is somewhat imprecise to say that in this poem Milton withdraws from politics to faith — where 'politics' is understood to denote a general subject of writing. We should say, rather, that in this poem Milton turns from writing about politics from a Mediterranean perspective and from attempting to incorporate that perspective into his Protestant world-view, to writing about politics (among other things) from a heretical Protestant perspective and, on that basis, dismissing and repudiating much of what counted as Mediterranean political wisdom.

For some critics, the fact that Milton would from 1658 to 1662 write an epic which, on the basis of his religious commitments, departs from pagan wisdom and abandons his own earlier attempts and those of his allies to combine that wisdom with Christian wisdom, or act as though it were possible to do so, would seriously compromise his standing as a hero. That is because they have constructed the heroic Milton partly on the grounds that he goes down fighting, hangs tough, does

¹² The remark is made in a passage added to the first *Defence* for the enlarged second edition of this work which was published in 1658. See *A Defence of the People of England*, p. 253.

¹³ Worden, 'Milton's Republicanism and the Tyranny of Heaven', p. 245.

and affirms the same thing 'early to late', remains active after the Restoration in what Norbrook calls 'the early modern public sphere'.¹⁴ This construction of the heroic Milton is based on not only a positive moral assessment of constancy and fortitude, but also a modern prejudice, a prejudice in favour of the socio-political over the religious. While Milton in this poem and on many other occasions would seem to share this assessment, he in this poem does not represent himself as one who shares this prejudice. His account of man, history, and himself in this poem suggests rather that, for him, religious belief is foundational. That is to say that his understanding of political societies and his evaluation of actions such as carrying out the duties of political, military, and judicial office are grounded in his beliefs about God and man as his creature. In the political prose, moreover, while attempting to accommodate pagan wisdom, Milton often affirms that his faith is first. Holding to this faith, living up to its implications, forwarding lessons, political and otherwise, that are in accordance with it could thus hardly count as ignominious retreat or surrender. It would count rather as a return — perhaps even a heroic return — to what for him were the basics, a kind of renovation in the Machiavellian sense of that term. That Milton's epic affirms a heterodox Protestant world-view that in many ways militates against crucial aspects of English republican ideology thus need not diminish the standing he enjoys in historicist readings of the late poetry. Seeing the late Milton in this way is, moreover, not to dismiss historicist criticism, but rather to historicize in a way that does not favour the socio-political at the expense of the religious. As Cedric Brown observes, 'in times of adversity, when men have fallen and the fit are few, when the great efforts for renewal seem to have failed, there may be a turning to the basics of godly discipline, and a need to reaffirm the providential scheme'.¹⁵ Responding to this need in times of adversity, Milton turns to the basics of godly discipline and reaffirms on an epic scale the providential scheme. When he does this, he finds the ancients and Machiavelli to be much less useful and relevant than he did when he was working for the Commonwealth.

When he does this, he also, finally, is rather less optimistic about the human condition than those who see the poem as an expression of Milton's republicanism would suggest. Although its rationalist and Arminian theology may be softer than Calvinist voluntarism, the poem nevertheless asserts a world-view according to

¹⁴ Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic*, throughout.

¹⁵ Brown, 'Great Senates and Godly Education', p. 60. I take the reading of *Paradise Lost* I am proposing to be consistent also with Neil Keeble's account of the conditions under which Milton was writing, in *Literary Culture of Nonconformity*.

which our maker, out of justice and mercy, wills that we suffer, grow old and weak, and die, that we do so without any resentment against our maker, and that we do so with faith, patience, hope, and charity for our fellow sufferers. Unlike the republicans who regard a particular way of living in this world and the renown one may gain by doing so as the ends of human existence, Milton, moreover, drastically diminishes the value of existence in this world by demoting it to merely the means to achieving the chief end for humans which is not of this world. If, as Lewalski claims, Milton in this poem continues to express his 'belief in the goodness of the human condition',¹⁶ that goodness thus derives not from the fact that existing in that condition in any particular way is of value in and of itself, but from the fact that it provides the opportunity to exist and perish in a way which will permit us to know a second life. And though Milton's representation of human existence before the fall may have some application to our current condition, the poem powerfully forces upon us the awareness not only that that condition has been lost, but also that we deserved to lose it and remain unworthy and incapable of existing in or regaining it on our own. That loss entails the loss of the freedom to be forever young, strong, beautiful, and happy, and the freedom to ascend to pure spirit and God. Many critics seem to find offensive these ways in which the poem devalues our current condition and insists on how, in relation to what we were and what we were intended by our maker to be, we are diminished. I wish to preserve the hard Protestant quality of this poem, in part because, in our time, I find it so . . . refreshing.

¹⁶ Lewalski, 'Paradise Lost and Milton's Politics', p. 149.

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